

Poor drainage causing floods

KL's system not up to par with development, says Cetdem

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PETALING JAYA: Climate change could be the reason for unusually high rainfall and long dry spells, but it is not the underlying cause for incidents such as landslides or flash floods.

The real culprit in such cases, said Centre for Environment, Technology and Development Malaysia (Cetdem) executive director Anthony Tan, is improper drainage and poorly planned and managed urban development.

"When a flash flood hits Kuala Lumpur and submerges parked cars, some people blame climate change. I think we should ask about the state of the city's drainage, its maintenance and whether it was originally designed to handle the volume of development that exists today," said Tan.

Citing another example, he said some people would say that an orphanage hit by a landslide was an act of God.

"We should also ask why the orphanage was allowed to be located there."

Tan said the frequency and severity of Pacific Ocean hurricanes and South China Sea typhoons in recent years appeared to be increasing, which could be an indication of changing climate patterns.



Waterlogged: When it rains, it pours in Kajang and the residents have been hard hit, with reported incidents this year of flooding taking place almost every other month.

Malaysia is fortunate as it is protected to a certain extent from the full brunt of typhoons as the country is "buffered" by Sumatra, Java, the Philippines and Sulawesi.

Tan said the Malaysian Meteorological Department (MetMalaysia) would be the most qualified to determine whether the country was facing the effects of climate change.

"Even if we are getting more floods due to heavier rainfall, our drainage

system has not been up to par with development that is taking place. We should not say that the problem is only due to the weather," he added.

MetMalaysia deputy director-general Alui Bahari said that although Monday's twister in Kedah was a rare phenomenon, tornadoes do occur in Malaysia but infrequently.

No injuries were reported but as many as 10 homes and a school

were damaged during the incident at 4.30pm.

Alui, who rushed to Kampung Alor Besar, Pendang, after the tornado struck, said they had received other reports over the years but had no concrete data about extreme weather events in the country.

"Even villagers there said they had had tornadoes before but they can't remember when they occurred," he added.