

The struggle to end flood woes

Cashless state councils unable to cope

KOTA BARU: The local governments of several states are trying their best to cope with floods, saying it is not an easy task.

The Kelantan government, for example, said its local authorities were facing financial problems to upgrade drainage and flood control measures in urban areas because they could not generate enough income to end flooding problems.

About 70% of dwellings here are not equipped with good drainage system.

"We need billions of ringgit to build an effective sewerage system and we do not have the capacity," state executive councillor Datuk Abdul Fatah Mahmood told reporters after attending the state exco meeting here yesterday.

He added that the government had instructed local governments to ensure that new housing estates built proper drainage systems to minimise the impact of floods.

Recently, Natural Resources and Environment Minister Datuk Seri Dr Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar said local councils had not provided technical assistance nor supervised construction projects, which contributed to flash floods.

In Kuantan, the president of Kuantan Municipal Council (MPK) Datuk Zulkifli Yaacob said the council had always been strict with town planning to prevent floods.

He added that MPK would use hazard mapping to identify which areas were vulnerable to natural disasters when approving construction projects.

"That includes the drainage system as



well. We do all this as a prevention measure for floods.

"In fact, our conditions are very strict. We now require developers to put in drains of 1,200mm depth when previously the minimum requirement was 800mm," said Zulkifli yesterday.

In Johor Baru, Urban Wellbeing and Local Government Minister Datuk Abdul Rahman Dahlan said the unpredictable weather caused by climate change had forced the Government to relook into the nationwide drainage system.

"The drainage system that we currently have is about 3m to 6m-wide which I do not think is able to sustain the amount of rainfall," he said after attending a briefing on the recent flash floods at Johor Baru City Council building yesterday.