

State govt slammed for not resolving flood issues

By **TAN SIN CHOW**
and **CHONG KAH YUAN**
north@thestar.com.my

GEORGE TOWN: Sahabat Alam Malaysia (SAM) has taken the Penang government to task for failing to resolve the flood problems in Bayan Baru which have caused thousands of people to be late for work every time there is a downpour.

Its president S.M. Mohamed Idris said a survey revealed that rapid development there and the failure of the drainage system during heavy rain caused the flash floods.

“Hill clearing and development on hill slopes in Sungai Ara are likely to be among the causes,” he said.

“We hope that the state government will stop all ongoing development projects in the area and also improve the drainage system.”

Yesterday, traffic jams were the order of the day as flash floods hit several low-lying areas in Bayan Lepas, Bayan Baru, Paya Terubong and Bandar Baru Air Itam after a downpour starting at about 6.30am.

The waters reached shin level in Jalan Mayang Pasir and Jalan Dato Ismail Hashim where rainfall of 127mm per hour was recorded.

The areas were also deemed impassable at one point and several cars reportedly stalled during the morning rush hour.

Other affected areas were Jalan P. Ramlee, Jalan Ismail Che Mat, Jalan Paya Terubong and Jalan Persiaran



No way in: An aerial view showing the Hotel Seri Malaysia area in Bayan Baru submerged in water after a heavy downpour.

Bukit Jambul 2 with a rainfall recorded at 91mm per hour.

Facebook user Carolyn said she officially declared a “public holiday” for her five-year-old daughter after she could not reach her kindergarten on time.

“After 45 minutes and I am still stuck within my housing area in Sungai Ara,” she said.

State Drainage and Irrigation Department (DID) director Sabri Abdul Mulok said the cause could be due to the under-sized culvert in Sungai Relau which is connected to Sungai Keluang.

“The standard culverts in Penang are about 0.6m. The water cannot be released smoothly during heavy rain and it led to a back-flow.

“We are in the midst of re-designing it.

“An open tender is expected to be called by year end,” he said.

State Flood Mitigation Committee chairman Chow Kon Yeow said no evacuation was reported, adding that the river burst its banks in Sungai Jelutong and Sungai Pinang after two hours of heavy rain.