

'Penang govt failed to increase drainage capacity'

FLASH FLOODS:

Study drainage impact before approving projects, says MNS adviser

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THE DAP-led state government continues to receive brickbats from various quarters following Friday's flash floods, which hit several parts of the state, with Bayan Baru being the worst affected.

Non-governmental organisation Malaysian Nature Society (MNS) pinned the blame on the state government's failure to increase the drainage capacity, especially in newly developed areas.

MNS Penang branch adviser D. Kanda Kumar said the state government had failed to look at the flooding issue holistically.

"Whenever there are new developments, the developers are required to build or increase the capacity of the drains at the development sites. Often times, the developers fail to increase the drainage capacity in the area. This causes flooding when the drainage downstream can't cope with the high volume of wastewater in the entire area," he told the *New Sunday Times* when contacted yesterday.

It was reported that hundreds of motorists were caught in flash floods in the state on Friday following a two-hour-long downpour in the morning.

Kanda said the state government should conduct studies on the drainage impact in an entire area, similar to traffic assessments, before approving any project.

"They should also ensure devel-



Bayan Baru was the worst affected area following a two-hour-long downpour in Penang on Friday. Pic courtesy of a NST reader

opers make the necessary upgrading for infrastructure before development projects start," he said, adding that the state government should pay as much attention to solving the flooding problems as it did on traffic.

"Maybe they do not feel like it is a big problem now. With global warming, which causes seawater levels to rise, and with an inadequate and outdated drainage system, in about 30 years, areas including the George Town heritage enclave will face

flooding," he said.

Concurring with Kanda, Sahabat Alam Malaysia president S.M. Mohamed Idris said the state government needed to consider the entire area and its surrounding and not just the development sites alone.

"With high-rise development, the density increases and, thus, the generation of wastewater also increases. They should consider whether the drainage system downstream is adequate to drain out the high volume of water, especially during

heavy downpours," he said.

He said the state government should also engage experts to determine the cause of the floods and come up with a solution.

State Flood Mitigation Committee chairman Chow Kon Yeow said developers were required to comply with drainage infrastructure, which helped to alleviate flooding, in each development project.

He, however, admitted that there was a need to address bottleneck areas to improve the situation.