

Downpour dampens Penang Deepavali joy

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FLASH FLOODS: 300 households in flood-prone areas affected

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PENANGITES, especially Hindus, had a bleak and miserable Deepavali celebration as flash floods inundated dozens of areas following hours of downpour yesterday.

More than 300 households were affected in the three-hour shower that brought more than 350mm of rainfall.

Some 100 houses in Jalan P. Ramlee, Jalan Terengganu and arterial roads in Bandar Baru Air Itam were submerged in knee-high water, forcing residents to salvage belongings on a gloomy Festival of Lights.

Water had seeped into the common level on the ground floor of a densely-populated flat in Bandar Baru Air Itam.

Jalan Paya Terubong and Taman Lumba Kuda were also affected by the floods.

S. Rajasekaran, 62, who lives in

flood-prone Jalan P. Ramlee, was at his wits' end with floods and had given up hope of seeing the problem resolved.

"I doubt the DAP-led state government knows that we suffer each time it rains.

"Our plight falls on deaf ears, and there is no way we can recover the hefty losses we have incurred from the damage over the years."

Rajasekaran, who had planned to have a big Deepavali gathering with his children and grandchildren, said the flash flood had dampened the festive mood.

"Floodwaters flowed into my house and the inside is all wet. I moved some fixtures to higher ground in time, but we are in no mood for a get-together."

A dejected Mohamad Rafiq Jalil, 46, who stays near Jalan P. Ramlee, rued about the losses he suffered each time flash floods hit his neighbourhood.

He said he was disappointed with the local authorities as well as the Irrigation and Drainage Depart-



Air Itam in George Town was inundated yesterday.
Pic courtesy of NST reader

ment, who he claimed often gave excuses for the floods.

"I am tired of hearing excuses from the state government, blaming the floods on the so-called 'King Tide' phenomenon and linking them to the tidal-change pattern.

"Nothing has been done to mitigate the flash floods. I am saddened that the much-politicised flood-mitigation schemes have come to nothing."

Several roads in Lebuhraya Thean Teik and Jalan Thean Teik were also flooded, submerging dozens of cars and causing woe to scores of car owners.

The rain started about 3pm. Wa-

ters rose quickly and became higher than waist level in several flood-prone areas.

Some residents waded through floodwaters to salvage belongings and transfer items to higher ground.

The entire section of the road was cordoned off and those living in the Sungai Pinang residential area joined in to help residents.

Firefighters also waded through knee-deep floodwaters to help stalled car owners push their vehicles to safety.

A landslide at the hillslope in Paya Terubong behind high-rise buildings missed several cars.

It was a close shave for many car owners as earth crumbled from the hillslope near a parking lot.

Floods hit the densely-populated Bandar Baru Air Itam area with many high-rise buildings.

In Lebuhraya Thean Teik and Jalan Masjid Negeri, which are two main arterial roads on the island, the rising water level caused a traffic crawl.

Some drivers tried to drive through rising waters, but their vehicles stalled.

An uprooted tree damaged a vehicle in Jalan Patani.

No one needed to be evacuated as the rain stopped about 8.30pm.