

32 tonnes of trash scooped out

Council cleans up drainage systems at flood-affected areas in Penang

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BUKIT MERTAJAM: The Seberang Prai City Council (MBSP) scooped out 32 tonnes of garbage from drains at flood-affected areas on the Penang mainland, said its mayor Datuk Rozali Mohamad.

He said council workers at 10 pump houses excavated the garbage brought down by floodwaters in just nine hours between 7pm Monday and 4am Tuesday.

"A total of 145 workers and 19 vehicles were deployed to remove the debris blocking the flow of water at the pump houses.

"The garbage did not only stress the drainage system at critical times, but they also cost a lot to be disposed of as the council had to pay its workers overtime and the tipping fee at the landfill," he said.

Some 47 areas on the mainland, mostly in the central district, were inundated while four relief centres were open to shelter about 200 evacuated residents.

Penang flood mitigation committee chairman Zairil Khir Johari said three flood mitigation projects worth about RM65mil in the district were ongoing.

"The projects in Parit 4 worth RM17mil, Parit 5 worth RM13.5mil and in Permatang Rawa worth RM29mil, are in progress, and will not function until they are completed around the middle of next year.

"There is also a RM4mil project in Jalan Tembikai comprising the con-



The aftermath: A man looking at the rubbish clogging up Sungai Nyuir near Jalan Chain Ferry in Butterworth.

struction of a pump house and a 1km bund along the river.

"Tender for the project will open in December," he said in a press conference at the central Seberang Prai district land office in Jalan Betek on Tuesday.

Apart from the heavy rainfall and inadequate drainage systems, Zairil said heavy siltation at the Sungai Juru estuary was also a factor and the state had allocated RM1mil to deepen it.

"The high amount of siltation at the estuary leaves the river with a depth of only about 1.5m, hampering the flow of water out to sea,"

he added.

Machang Bubok assemblyman Lee Khai Loon, who was also present at the press conference, urged the public to avoid visiting the Cherok To'kun forest reserve until its trails had been cleaned up by the Forestry Department.

"The heavy rainfall has brought down rocks and soil on its tarred road up the hill.

"The landslides and road damage at the park have worsened after the rain. Repair work from the storm in November 2017 is still ongoing and now more rocks have fallen on the trails," he said.

Meanwhile, SMK Jit Sin principal Ang Kooi Looi said they had informed the school's students who were sitting for their SPM and STPM examinations to head to the nearest examination centre if they were unable to access their school in the event of a major flood.

"We have 2,544 students and about 800 of them will be taking their STPM and SPM exams in October and November," she told reporters after a meeting between the school's board with state education officers and Padang Lalang assemblyman Chong Eng at the school.