

Flash floods return to haunt Kg Cempaka

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KAMPUNG Cempaka in Petaling Jaya faced its worst flash flood last month, according to residents.

The flooding of part of the 50-year-old village occurred as Sungai Kayu Ara overflowed during a downpour on Oct 9.

Water rose up to 1.52m and villagers suffered material losses.

Village chairman Theresa Lim said the flash flood that day was the worst she witnessed since her childhood as she grew up there.

She feared if the deepening of the river did not take place soon, villagers would experience even more losses.

The village has about 1,030 families and 30% of its population were senior citizens.

A sizeable number of residents here fall under the B40 category and they were the ones worst-hit, said Lim.

"During one of the flash floods, a villager lost a pet when it was crushed by a refrigerator.

"Water rises fast in a downpour and we must rush to higher ground immediately.

"The villagers will usually drive their vehicles out and leave behind other belongings such as motorcycle and household items. Sofas, televisions, bed sets and racks are often damaged in the flash floods.

"We have many in the B40 group who are tailors and work in construction or factories.

The losses affect them greater financially," she said.

She added that flood victims found the cleaning up a bane.

Residents hope flood barrier project in Sg Kayu Ara starts soon



Resident Teoh Jen Mei, who lives beside the river, showing how high the water rose to during the Oct 9 flash flood in Kampung Cempaka.

"The place smells like a sewer after the flood, and heaps of rubbish and damaged household items need to be discarded.

We help each other during these trying times," she said.

Lim hoped the authorities would realise that the river needed to be deepened urgently as the flash floods were affecting the residents emotionally and psychologically.

"A resident who lives close to the riverbank tells me she cannot sleep when it rains at night for fear of flooding.

"She becomes very nervous and will just wait for the rain to subside before sleeping," said Lim.

She said in the past, the river underwent a digging process to remove the soil and sediment during former Damansara Utama assemblyman Yeo Bee Yin's term.

"For a year, we did not have any flash flood problem. However, the problem continued after that," said Lim.

She added that the authorities were also trying to break some of the larger stones in the river which might improve water flow.

"However, we are still waiting for the river to be dug deeper. This needs to be undertaken by Drainage and Irrigation Department Selangor (DID) and we were told by the department that it



Residents left their houses in a hurry during the Kampung Cempaka flash flood and were unable to save their vehicles and valuables.

is still waiting for funding," she said.

Bandar Utama assemblyman Jamaliah Jamaluddin spoke about the flash flood issue at the state assembly recently.

She said the flash flood issue could not be prolonged. The matter had brought great fear and suffering to the residents.

"The recent flash flood caused damage to 120 houses. When they see the water rising fast, villagers frantically remove their vehicles from their houses.

"Many of the poor residents affected by the floods have household income of below RM1,500.

"This is even lower compared to

the national B40 household income, which is supposed to be RM4,000 and lower. Their losses cannot be taken lightly," added Jamaliah.

The Sungai Damansara flood barrier project was approved under the scope of the 11th Malaysian Plan in 2016. Some RM64mil was allocated for it. Of the budget, Sungai Kayu Ara has a budget allocation of RM20mil.

"However, up until now, the project has not started.

"I hope Selangor Menteri Besar Amirudin Shari and the state will view this matter seriously," she said.

At press time, DID has yet to respond on the matter.