
Landslide tragedy revisited

By Masriwanie Muhamading

streets@nstp.com.my

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KUALA LUMPUR: It has been two years since the devastating landslide in Bukit Antarabangsa destroyed 14 homes and claimed many lives.

Over 100 residents, representatives of the local council and visitors, including Bukit Antarabangsa assemblyman Mohamed Azmin Ali, Ampang MP Zuraida Kamaruddin and the State Exco for Tourism, Consumer Affairs and Environment Elizabeth Wong, turned up on Remembrance Day at the newly set up Ampang Jaya Municipal Council (MPAJ) Residents' Committee of Zone Five office.

"The tragedy has taught us many lessons and we hope the authorities would be stricter about giving approval for new development on hillside areas," said Azmin.

"The Coalition of Bukit Antarabangsa Residents' Associations (Cobara) also plays an important role in raising awareness among residents on the risks posed at hillside areas," said Azmin.

The association established in May last year addresses issues faced by the community and works with MPAJ to filter reports on landslide alerts made by residents under its Slope Watch programme.

Cobara chairman Shahrul Hafiz Teh Abdullah said: "MPAJ receives a number of reports on landslide but they only have a few people to check on them.

"Some reports may be overlooked but under the Slope Watch programme we help residents filter the reports so that only those that require attention would reach the MPAJ."

Wong raised a number of issues pertaining to the residents, including providing legal assistance to victims.

Wong said the report on the landslide tragedy should be disseminated to the public as it involved public safety.

Azmin said he would continue to raise the issue in parliament and requested that the landslide report be distributed to the public.

K. Thanarajah who represented the victims said they hope the rehabilitation work at the affected area would be completed.

"The government has allocated RM70 million to rehabilitate the affected area. Unfortunately, the amount is not sufficient and currently only 90 per cent of the area has been rehabilitated.

"The authorities should address weaknesses in their system to prevent the tragedy from happening again.

"They should look into the security procedures for prevention of looting," said Thanarajah.

The victims hope the authorities would fulfil their promises made as well as compensate the victims.

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