

Headline	Residents' complacency disappoints authorities		
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Residents' complacency disappoints authorities

CAMERON HIGHLANDS: Authorities are not the only group who found the Bertam Valley residents' poor response of the mock drill disheartening.



As Bertam Valley village chief, Wong Fook Chai (pic) was equally frustrated when it came to guiding the residents in carrying out the exercise.

"This is already the sixth time a mock drill was conducted since the mud floods in 2013.

"It is a good thing that the previous drills have taught residents to be more aware and knowledgeable on the evacuation process in the event of a flood," he said, adding, however, that the residents appeared quite complacent in this latest drill.

Wong, 59, said he was disappointed that many of people continued with their activities despite getting ample warnings from the emergency sirens to pack up and move to the safe point where they were supposed to gather.

"They know what they should do and where the higher grounds are located. But it is sad that they refuse to do so during the drill, thinking

that there was no need to participate in the exercise," he said.

Wong was supportive of the initiative taken by the authorities in educating and raising public awareness, saying he hoped that there would be no apathy among the residents.

Tuition teacher Amy Koo, 40, said that she felt much safer living in the valley now after the expansion of the water drainage tunnels had been successfully completed.

A victim of the two mud floods that struck the village in 2013 and 2014, she said she used to be very anxious whenever there were heavy rains.

"Back then, any release of water from the dam would cause the river to overflow.

"But now the river is wider and deeper. The sirens are also much louder especially during the night, thanks to efforts made by authorities to ensure our safety.

"I feel that things are safer now. Perhaps other residents here feel the same way as well," said the mother of one, who was waiting in Bertam Valley to fetch her 10-year-old son from a nearby school when



There it goes: Residents gathering at a bridge to witness the Bertam River water levels rising after water was released from the Sultan Abu Bakar dam. (below) A police officer jotting down the activity log at the dam during TNB's flood mock drill.

the emergency sirens were blaring during the drill.

Another victim of the previous two mud floods was businessman Mohd Anuar Mohd Zain, whose brother's house was completely destroyed by flood waters two years ago.

He was standing on the bridge across the river with his friends during the drill.

"Previously, many of us weren't very mindful on what to do. But with the upgrade of the siren system and more meetings with the local authorities, things have changed," said Mohd Anuar, 35.

"People are more alert now when it comes to flood warnings. We know better what to do now," he said.

