

Letters

HIGH-TIDE PHENOMENON

Beware the impact on environment

THERE is nothing much that can be done to prevent flash floods in low-lying areas in the coastal region following the high-tide phenomenon. High-tide floods are caused by gravitational force, which is a natural phenomenon occurring frequently throughout the world of late. The occurrence of super moon from time to time is somewhat related to this. This annual natural phenomenon hit the coastal region from Oct 16 to 18 with a great impact on the environment compared with the previous years. The environmental impact of such nature would have far-reaching implications on human lives and agriculture in the country in due course.

Scientists tend to believe that open burning throughout the world has resulted in the emission of greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide, into the atmosphere that blanket the Earth, making it warmer. As of now, the level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere has reached 400ppm, almost double the amount compared with before the industrial revolution.

The worldwide increase in temperatures on the Earth surface helps accelerate global warming. In Paris this year, 195 countries pledged to contain the temperature increase by up to 2°C to avoid disasters from happening in terms of rise in sea levels and vi-

olent weather conditions.

Global cooling and warming in the history of Earth are a natural phenomenon, occurring intermittently for a period of time. However, human activities have hastened the process. Evidence from studies conducted worldwide points towards that direction. The increase in Earth's temperature will melt ice in the polar regions of the globe that results in the rise of sea level, which can be felt in Southeast Asia, too.

Studies show that the sea level increases by a few millimetres per year. So far, the sea level has gone up by almost 1m compared with 100 years ago. If the trend continues as scientists have predicted, I cannot imagine what will happen to the lowlands near the coastal parts of our country and other countries. The rise in sea level due to global warming will make the high-tide flood phenomenon worse. Some had predicted that this could happen in the east coast states of the peninsula next month.

For all we know, the 1m rise in sea level could flood the lowlands of Southeast Asia. The environmental consequences cannot be described in words. Global warming can also deteriorate weather patterns across the globe. Nowadays, we experience stronger typhoons, violent storms and heavier rainfall. The most affected countries are the Philippines, China, Taiwan and

Japan. The recent Hurricane Matthew that created havoc in Haiti and Florida, the United States, is a case in point.

If what had been mentioned in Parliament is anything to go by, we are not spared this wrath of nature. According to the forecast by a government agency, in some coastal areas of Malaysia, the sea level could rise by as much as 0.5m to 1m. The minister in charge mentioned that about 18 per cent of Malaysia would be flooded due to the rise in sea level in 2100. What does this mean to those living near the sea when this environmental disaster comes in full force? How do we save our lives and those we love?

To prove my point, check what happened in our backyard last year. Then, use this to predict what could possibly happen should the trend in temperature rise continue to haunt us.

A friend from the east coast state of the Peninsular Malaysia showed me photographs of the areas affected by the high-tide phenomenon last year, which was rather scary. The Oct 16-to-18 high-tide phenomenon had proved beyond doubt that it could occur again in the coastal regions of the peninsula, with similar likely scenarios.

Another friend, who used to work in Port Klang for many years, told me that the level of spring tides around the port had in-

creased (4m to 5m) compared with in Langkawi or Kuantan (about 3m) in recent years.

But the highest level reached in the vicinity of Port Klang from Oct 16 to 18 at the height of the high-tide phenomenon was 5.6m to 5.7m. What does this mean to the areas surrounding the port? This

will result in ships berthed at the port to collide with each other. There could be material damage not only to the ships but also to the surrounding lowlands.

Land degradation is another matter of concern to the stakeholders in the areas.

Salt from the seawater will in-



The world experiences **stronger typhoons, violent storms and heavier rainfall now.**

crease the electrical conductivity (EC) of the soils. An EC value of more than 4dS/m is disastrous to crops such as rice.

I am concerned about the rice fields in the coastal regions of the west coast of the Peninsular

Malaysia should the high-tide floods of that magnitude recur.

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