Bridge over Troubled Waters

By: Engr. Mah Soo, F.I.E.M., P.Eng.
Chief Editor

Many people going on tours will admire bridges for their grand structures and aesthetic appearances and maybe a handful would study them as engineering feats in surmounting difficulties to have them created.

In fact, bridges are built as an access across difficult terrain and rivers for communication between locations and communities. They even exert their influence in the form of elevated highways in solving traffic flow problems.

Lately, Malaysia has been beset with the woes of flash floods and the most recent flooding in Kuala Lumpur had even brought the wrath of our Prime Minister as highlighted by the media. It seemed futile in offering excuses and reasons under such circumstances but to start building bridges to ride over such troubled waters.

Engineers are looked upon to come up with solutions to these problems and this is as good an opportunity as any for The Institution of Engineers, Malaysia to start building bridges and inroads to the Government or mend any broken ones if they are already built but not useable due to neglect. This is a good time for the IEM and its members in the industry and academics to rise to the occasion to the call of duty to serve the country and to put words into action.

Much has been said that clogged drainage and river siltation caused the flash floods. Would it not be more immediate and effective to solve such problems first while waiting for the SMART tunnel and the building of settling ponds to be completed?

Though IEM is a learned society and non-profitable organization, the Government should not expect it to live on fresh air, sunshine and free-of-charge volunteerism. If 'mega-bucks' could be paid to foreign consultants to carry out studies, would it not be possible to channel such funds to locals and why not The IEM to get the job done as they have a reputation to safeguard and know the local environment better?

The bottom line is to get things done and this needs professionalism, competent control and commitment to get the expected results. We sincerely hope The IEM will commit and act immediately as a service to the country and society in attempting to manage such crisis.

We sincerely hope that all members of The IEM will give all our support to our President wherever and whenever as engineers who care for the country, society and rakyat in these times of need. ■

Mishap, Disaster and Catastrophe

By: Engr. Dr Ramlee Karim, F.I.E.M., P.Eng.
Bulletin Editor

I read the news today, Oh Boy
I read about landslides
Floods in Bali, Dundee and Rawalpindi
And the SMART tunnel
I read about a building collapse
Wall and ceiling collapse
And about murders and suicides

I attended the ISM dinner last night
Oh what a night
Oh what a sight
And a culinary delight
Only five of us on table thirty-eight
The rest must have thought it's a waste of time
For me there must be a few inches increase in my waist-line

I attended the ISM dinner last night
Lucky draws throughout the night
As usual we didn't win anything on a free ticket
The speeches were long
There was mention of construction collapse
There was mention of safety collapse
There was mention of Payment issues
Payment difficulties to and by Contractors

And we talked about Razak Baginda, Altantuya of Mongolia
We talked about CCC
We talked of Building Surveyors
And we talked of the diminishing role of Engineers
And we had Frans Peters
Singing Malay, Chinese, Hindi and English oldies
But with the Nirwana Pillars and being on the last row
Then we saw her, then we did not

So we continued talking of mishaps, disasters and catastrophes
Why indeed do we have all these failures
Is it the design, is it the installation,
Is it construction supervision, is it operation,
Or is it repair and maintenance.

Structural collapse
Ethical lapse
Technical *silaps*
Financial *songlaps*