SAFE TEA TIME

Preparing for Gaia's fury

by ***Ir. Shum Keng Yan***

OF late, we have been seeing a pattern of increasingly severe natural disasters. Perhaps Gaia has lost her patience.

We are lucky in the sense that our country is relatively spared from major disasters such as earthquakes and typhoons. Still, year after year, we read about severe flooding in many parts of our country.

What can we do to be safe under these conditions?

Firstly, keep a rational and calm mind during the event. We can mitigate it somewhat with a little bit of preparation to survive the first few days. This is a basic guide, so please feel free to modify it to suit your family. Keep in mind that even though disaster management is a field by itself, we can still prepare for it.

FLOOD

If possible, secure your home as best you can and move your family to a safe place. If you need to stay back, check out this link http://www.civildefence.gov.my/dokumen/panduan_kecemasan.pdf. In fact, this handbook covers various emergencies.

Link to the National Security Council (Majlis Keselamatan Negara):
http://www.mkn.gov.my/v1/index.php/bm/fokus-mkn/fokus_pengurusan-bencana

TYPHOON AND EARTHQUAKE

If you are living in a country where there are severe natural disasters (since some of us work outside of Malaysia), be prepared. Most likely you are staying in a hotel or rented apartment. Make sure you know the local emergency contacts such as the police, fire brigade, Malaysian Embassy and, of course, your host. Get a copy of the country's emergency plan (if any) and know what you should do.

Some companies prepare emergency kits for their employees. It is not rocket science to prepare your own survival kit. Many experts differ on the contents that should go inside the kit (due to different location requirements and experts' experience). This is a starting point (please remember to replace perishables).

Contents:

1) Drinking water (enough for your family for the first few days)
2) Dry food (biscuits, crackers, energy bars)
3) Large plastic bags to protect your valuables, to make a makeshift raincoat or to keep your food safe from the weather
4) Swiss Army knife
5) Torchlight with spare batteries
6) Ropes
7) Small first aid kit
8) Some cash (for post rescue use)
9) Baby needs (food, clothing, etc.)
10) A knapsack to keep all of the above

Optional items:

1) One set of clothing
2) Warm clothing (if in cold climate)
3) Toilet paper/towel
4) Dusk mask (earthquake rubble dust)

Further support will depend on the national emergency response plan.

I have personally been caught in two typhoons. So it pays to be ready. Remember to keep a rational and calm mind.

To share your survival experience, do email me at *pub@iem.org.my*. ■

Perhaps someday we will not just think of ourselves as coming from a certain country, instead, we should realise we are from the same planet. After all, Mother Nature does not have borders!

Circulating in cyberspace ...

Oops!

Two men were playing golf at their local golf course.
One of them was about to chip onto the green when a long funeral procession came on the road next to the course.
He stopped in mid-swing, took off his golf cap, closed his eyes, and bowed down in prayer.
His friend said: "Wow, that is the most thoughtful and touching thing I have ever seen. You truly are a kind man."
The man replied: "Yeah, well we were married for 35 years."