

Govt mulls Japanese proposal from 1990s to address flood woes

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PARLIAMENT | The government is considering the recommendation from a Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica) study to construct high embankments along the coastline to address the flood woes nationwide.

Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim said that the recommendation, made around 20 years ago, could be pursued once the nationwide Flood Mitigation Plan projects have been completed.

“There was a recommendation, I believe more than 20 years ago, made by the Japanese government through a Jica project, to address flood issues along the west coast (of Malaysia). Back in the 1990s, the required cost was already around RM10 billion, and now it might be RM20 billion.

“Among others, Jica recommended that high embankments be built along the coastline. Of course, this will take time, and hopefully, once the economy is stronger, we can resolve our flood mitigation issues,” he said during the Minister’s Question Time at the Dewan Rakyat sitting today.

Anwar said this in reply to a supplementary question from Yusuf Abd Wahab (GPS-Tanjong Manis), who asked about the government's approach to solving the annual flood woes, which cost hundreds of millions each year.

Unprecedented rainfall

Anwar said, so far, the government has allocated nearly RM15 billion for the Flood Mitigation Plan projects nationwide in a bid to address the flood issues, in addition to utilising the latest technology to predict weather patterns for public dissemination.

However, he acknowledged that these efforts are still insufficient, and no country is able to control the weather, even those with the best technologies, such as China, the United States, and Europe.

“But efforts must be made... it’s just that this year, the rainfall was unprecedented, far higher than expected, with five days of rain equaling the total rainfall of six months,” he said.

He cited several areas in Kelantan as an example, with recorded rainfall readings of over 1,167mm within five days from Nov 26 to 30. In Terengganu, several areas had rainfall readings up to 1,761mm in the same period, he added.

In reply to Mumtaz Md Nawari (PN-Tumpat) regarding road damage caused by floods, Anwar said the government has provided nearly RM1 billion in immediate assistance to address various damages, with priority given to repairing schools, hospitals and roads.

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