

Preparing for the worst

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DPM: We must adopt contingency plan for disasters

PETALING JAYA: Malaysia will adopt an appropriate mitigation plan after studying the impact of floods and other extreme weather conditions on the country's socio-economic development.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, who chairs the Cabinet committee on natural disasters, said Malaysians had to accept that the recent floods, which hit several states, including Johor, were caused by climate changes brought about by global warming.

He added that the authorities also needed to be fully prepared to minimise problems for the people if the country was hit by similar disasters

in the future.

"When we are able to carry out such environmental impact studies, the authorities can carry out long-term plans and be able to reduce the socio-economic damage caused by floods or natural disasters through well-prepared schemes that we can implement to minimise the problem," he told reporters after seeing off 257 military personnel, who will participate as United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (Unifil) peacekeepers, at the Subang RMAF airbase here yesterday.

Najib, said among the short and mid-term prevention plans that will be carried out to prevent the recur-

rence of floods are the installation of high-capacity water pumping plants, deepening rivers and streams and clearing the waterways of rubbish and debris.

The authorities should also invest in flood mitigation schemes at low-lying areas, he added.

"We have to make our own studies to find out the long-term environmental and socio-economic consequences of climatic changes caused by global warming and implement appropriate action plans."

Najib also said the floods, which had hit Johor twice, might have receded slowly in some areas due to

different topographical features of the state and smaller drains in the affected areas.

The Star reported on Sunday that the rising temperature of the Indian Ocean brought about by global warming could have contributed to the unusual weather, which caused the massive floods in Johor and other parts of the country.

Climate expert Associate Prof Dr Fredolin Tangang had said the warming of the Indian Ocean, brought about by a series of events starting with the melting of ice in Greenland, could have caused the unusual and adverse weather conditions in South-East Asia.