

KUALA LUMPUR: The cause of the unusually massive floods in Johor should be determined by a technical study, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said yesterday, reiterating Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak's comment on Wednesday.

The deputy prime minister had made it clear that the cause of the floods would be determined through a technical study, Syed Hamid told reporters.

He was asked to comment on the Singapore government's statement denying a claim by Johor Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman that the floods were caused by reclamation works on Pulau Tekong by Singapore.

Abdul Ghani had said the reclamation had caused the narrowing of the Johor River mouth and slowed discharge of excess rain water into the Johor Straits.

Syed Hamid, who is also the MP for Kota Tinggi, one of the worst-hit districts in Johor, said he believed the technical committee would look at all possibilities to ascertain the real cause.

Let technical study decide: Syed Hamid

The Sun - 2/2/2007

Elaborating on the soon-to-be conducted study, he said the technical committee would determine whether the flooding would be an annual occurrence and the remedial measures to be taken to address the problem.

On Wednesday, Singapore's Ministry of National Development said there was no scientific basis for the allegation that its land reclamation on Pulau Tekong contributed to the recent massive floods in Johor.

"This is confirmed by results from technical studies commissioned separately by both the Malaysian government and the Singapore

government as part of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea dispute settlement proceedings on Singapore's land reclamation works at Pulau Tekong and Tuas View Extension," it said.

The ministry said a coastal hydraulic study undertaken by Malaysia's Drainage and Irrigation Department in September 2002 on the impact of Singapore's reclamation works concluded that there were no appreciable changes to the water levels within the Straits of Johor.

The ministry also cited a separate environmental impact assessment report prepared by Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, commissioned by the Malaysian government, which reported similar findings.

Technical studies commissioned by the Singapore government in 2003 reached the same conclusions, it said.
- Bernama