

No delaying flood projects

Mitigation efforts will be expedited, says Prime Minister

By VENESA DEVI
venesa@thestar.com.my

SEGAMAT: Flood mitigation projects including those in Johor will be expedited, says the Prime Minister, adding that there is no need to call for an emergency in the state as the situation is still under control.

Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said floodwater in several areas had started to recede since flooding began last Wednesday.

"The government has decided not to announce a flood emergency as rainfall is expected to be lower. Several places have also seen floodwater receding today.

"However, there are some places that may have stagnant water and this may take some time, but there is no need to announce a state of emergency for now," he said after visiting evacuees at SJK(C) Kampung Tengah yesterday.

He was replying to a question on whether there was a need to declare an emergency in Johor after the number of those displaced by the floods rose.

The number of flood victims in five states has reached 50,791 people as at 2pm yesterday with indications that the number will rise.

Anwar also gave his assurance that flood mitigation projects would be expedited.

"This is a serious issue and if we do not take any action, it will happen again. This is not the first time we've experienced floods; we've seen them come and go for years.

"The government has decided to speed up the operation of some RM600mil worth of flood mitigation projects," he said, adding, however, that the projects would still have to undergo tenders.

"I previously postponed the projects as I did not want there to be leakages in the money that has been allocated to help the people (and for it to be stolen).

"As such, the projects will still go through tender procedures, although we are speeding things up.

"All flood mitigation projects that



On the ground: Anwar meeting flood evacuees at SK Gemereh in Segamat. - Bernama

have been approved, including those in Johor, must start operating starting June. We cannot delay them any longer," he added.

He also gave a stern warning to those planning to make use of the floods to get some rewards.

"I urge the relevant departments to ensure that the aid that has been allocated to help the people be channelled to them immediately. Do not wait any longer," he said, adding that he had called up important government-linked companies (GLCs) for assistance.

"Tenaga Nasional Bhd will help to solve electricity outage issue and Yayasan Sime Darby will be carrying out a health camp for some

1,500 families. They will also assist to collect some RM20mil in donations as extra aid for Johor flood victims," he said.

He previously said the Federal Government would channel flood relief amounting to RM50mil to Johor to help flood victims.

Bernama reported that Anwar earlier arrived at SK Gemereh where 125 people from 32 families were taking shelter, chatting with them for about 20 minutes.

He then visited evacuees at SJK(C) Kampung Tengah which has 502 people from 133 families.

Earlier, he was briefed on the flood situation at the 4th Royal Artillery Regiment, Segamat Camp.

Meanwhile, Johor Menteri Besar Datuk Onn Hafiz Ghazi expressed his gratitude to the Prime Minister for extending assistance to the flood-stricken state.

"The Johor government would like to thank the Prime Minister for approving an immediate assistance of RM50mil for the floods in Johor.

"This is in addition to the RM10mil immediate allocation announced by Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi.

"Johor is also grateful that he has reaffirmed his stand to expedite flood mitigation plans in the state and for taking into consideration our faulty roads as well as the destruction of plants, animals and others," he said.