



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim reaffirmed that no one is excluded from flood damage compensation in Dewan Rakyat, yesterday. BERNAMA PIC

SUNGAI GOLOK BASIN PROJECT

PM: LAND ACQUISITION ACCELERATED

It will be completed in 6 months and govt could save RM1.7b, says Anwar

KUALA LUMPUR

LAND acquisition for the Sungai Golok Integrated River Basin (PLSB) project will now be completed within six months, said Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

The prime minister said by expediting all three phases of the project, the government could save RM1.7 billion.

"Last year, we decided not only to continue with the original (flood mitigation) programme but also to expedite the process.

"Land acquisition for the project previously took more than 24 months. The state government (of Kelantan) has now committed to completing it within six months, allowing us to accelerate the process," he added during the Prime Minister's Question Time in Parliament yesterday.

Anwar was responding to a question from Syed Saddiq Syed Abdul Rahman (Muda-Muar) on the government's measures in addressing floods during monsoon seasons, and unforeseen factors in areas prone to floods or

at risk of flooding in future.

He said he had told Kelantan Menteri Besar Mohd Nassrudin Daud that the project must begin according to plan, and that preparations have already started.

"I have also discussed with the Deputy Prime Minister (Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof) on the need for acceleration due to potential financial losses.

"Nationwide, flood mitigation expenses amount to RM1 billion a year. While the exact estimates may vary, our review of budget allocations shows that significant funding remains available.

"Our priority is to speed up the process, and that requires faster land acquisition. Some states take up to two years for land acquisition, with the fastest cases taking one year."

Anwar said 126 flood mitigation projects have been approved with a cost of RM22.57 billion.

Of this, 74 are under implementation and 35 are in the pre-implementation phase.

Another project that would be expedited is the flood mitigation

project in Rantau Panjang, where the government has decided to merge all three phases.

Anwar said this project involved negotiations concerning Sungai Golok, Rantau Panjang, and the dredging and cleaning of the Sungai Golok estuary, which require cooperation between both the federal government and the Thai government.

"Expediting this project means an additional RM2 billion. At the same time, by accelerating all three phases of the Sungai Golok PLSB, we are saving RM1.7 billion.

"That is why I stress that governance and transparency in projects must be upheld. We are also expediting land acquisition in Johor. And for the High-Priority Flood Mitigation project in Johor, the cost of RM1.64 billion has already been allocated, including for two projects in Segamat, Batu Pahat and Ledang.

"These projects are being brought forward 12 months ahead of the initial project planning projections."

He added that by expediting the projects, the government was providing state governments additional Malaysia Road Record Information System funds.

"The menteri besar requested

that these funds be used, including for the construction of Bailey Bridges. We agreed to this."

Anwar reiterated that no one would be excluded from receiving compensation for flood-related damages.

"All affected homes must receive support. I do not want any deviation from this general directive."

He said aid distribution from the government was specifically for those registered at temporary relief centres and was carried out in collaboration with state governments and district offices.

The distribution of aid from government-linked companies or government-linked investment companies is also coordinated in cooperation with state governments, the Implementation Coordination Unit and several non-governmental organisations.

Anwar was responding to a supplementary question from Datuk Muztaz Md Nawawi (PN-Tumpat) on whether the government would compensate those who suffered losses due to delays in flood mitigation projects.

He was also responding to Riduan Ruben (Ind-Tenom) on how aid from various entities was distributed during flood periods.