



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim speaking to reporters onboard a Malaysia Airlines plane en route to Kuala Lumpur on Monday night. BERNAMA PIC

AID AGENCIES DEPLOYED

PM: FLOODS A MAJOR CONCERN FOR GOVT

Huge amounts spent on mitigation works, focus now on helping victims, says Anwar

NAIROBI

DATUK Seri Anwar Ibrahim said the floods that have inundated many areas nationwide were a major concern as the government had already spent huge amounts on mitigation works.

The prime minister said he had been monitoring developments in the country and receiving updates while on his trip to Africa for the G20 Summit in Johannesburg, with stopovers in Addis Ababa in Ethiopia and Nairobi in Kenya.

"I have been monitoring, of course... twice a day," he said.

"We have instructed all agencies, including Nadma (the National Disaster Management Agency), to do the maximum, whatever that is to ease the burden (on flood victims)."

Anwar was speaking to reporters onboard the Malaysia Airlines plane bringing him back to Kuala Lumpur on Monday night.

Anwar said the floods were troubling as the government had disbursed much funds for mitigation.

He said such works previously took time to complete due to issues such as land acquisition and



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contract and tender processes, but much of it was now underway.

"You can see, for example, some areas in Kelantan where the flood mitigation project has been completed. You can see the substantial reduction in impact and losses."

Anwar said the government was now focused on immediate measures to help the victims.

He said he had been told that the situation was fluid, with some flood relief centres closed while others were being opened.

"The worrying part is that too many are affected."

"From the latest figures I read just now, some centres have closed, which means things are returning to normal."

"It is a sort of flash flood. But I think in Kuala Lumpur, the soil erosion is affecting many residential areas and trees are being uprooted."

On the preparedness of disaster management teams, Anwar said the various agencies had done an admirable job in helping victims.

"We can compare it with many countries. We were quite prepared."

"Meetings were held months before, chaired by Datuk Seri Zahid and we got weekly reports even before I left," Anwar said, referring to his deputy, Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, who, as National Disaster Management Committee chairman, oversees Nadma.

Anwar said the authorities had anticipated heavy rainfall in certain areas and Nadma had opened relief centres swiftly.

"So, I think we are doing our best."

The number of evacuees nationwide rose to more than 20,000 people up to 4pm yesterday, with Kelantan, Perlis and Perak recording the largest increases following continuous heavy rain across the northern and east coast states.

Nadma said it was well prepared to handle the first and subsequent waves of the northeast monsoon, with more than 100,000 personnel on standby.

Bernamea reported that Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Shamsul Azri Abu Bakar said Anwar was briefed on the latest flood developments shortly after returning from Africa.

He said he had the opportunity to update Anwar on the flood situation as well as matters concerning the public service.

"In the brief window available, I was able to provide him with the latest updates on the ongoing floods affecting several states, alongside updates on public service matters," he said on social media.