

SABAH FLOODS

'FAST-TRACK FLOOD RECOVERY'

Usual channels will take far too long to expedite repair works, says Anwar

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THE flood recovery process in Sabah needs to be expedited, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said yesterday after visiting areas hit by the disaster.

"I do not want to follow the normal process because this flood and the damage are not normal circumstances," he said after visiting Institut Pendidikan Guru's Gaya campus here.

"If we go through the usual procedures, it will take far too long to complete the necessary infrastructure works.

"So, we have asked for the process to be accelerated."

Apart from the site of a landslide near the campus, Anwar also visited Country Heights and temporary relief centres in Kolopis and Kampung Sarapung, both in Penampang.

Several districts in Sabah — Kota Kinabalu, Penampang, Papar, Beaufort, Membakut and Sipitang — were among the worst hit by floods and landslides following several days of continuous rain since last weekend.

Thirteen people died after being buried in landslides, while a Sabah Electricity staff was swept away by strong currents in Sungai Nuntunan, in Apin-Apin, Keningau, while carrying out restoration work.

The collapse of a transmission tower in Penampang, which supplies electricity to parts of the



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim visiting flood victims at the Kampung Sarapung temporary relief centre in Penampang yesterday. With him is Chief Minister Datuk Seri Hajiji Noor. BERNAMA PIC

east coast of Sabah, left more than 200,000 consumers with power outages and water supply disruptions.

"When I was in Doha earlier, I had given instructions to mobilise the entire federal government machinery, including the approval of an additional RM10 million allocation," said Anwar.

"For now, apart from the RM10 million, we have distributed RM1.5 million here, RM300,000 there and so on.

"We can coordinate this between the state and federal governments, and I will request that the process be expedited."

Anwar also said flood victims had begun receiving financial aid during his earlier visits.

"Some received RM20,000, some RM2,000. But the important thing is not the cash itself. It is the housing, basic facilities and school supplies for the children. That is what matters. And we will channel this assistance."

On the landslide near Institut Pendidikan Guru's Gaya campus, he said Education Minister Fadhlina Sidek had submitted an initial report to the cabinet on Wednesday.

"We are now waiting for the final report, which I have requested to be expedited.

"The government is waiting for an engineering report to determine whether it can be rebuilt on the same site.

"(Otherwise), we will need to discuss with the state government to identify a new area immediately."

Present during the visit were Chief Minister Datuk Seri Hajiji Noor, Sabah Works Minister Datuk Shahelmei Yahya and other state ministers.

Page 1 pic: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim visiting the site of a landslide near Institut Pendidikan Guru's Gaya campus in Kota Kinabalu yesterday.