

**SOP To Tackle Major Floods To Be Drawn Up Within Six Months - Najib
Bernama
Jan 10, 2015**

PEKAN, Jan 10 (Bernama) -- A standard operating procedure (SOP) to tackle major floods will be drawn up and tabled in the cabinet within six months as a guideline for everyone in facing the disaster.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said the new SOP would cover various aspects including increasing the assets, command and control, communication equipment, simulation training, meteorological services, as well as the power supply aspect.

"The existing SOP is merely to face ordinary floods, so a new SOP needs to be drawn up so that we will be more prepared including in terms of command and control and appropriate assets to face the floods.

"If the Malaysian Armed Forces (ATM) is to become the main agency, then it will be supplied with appropriate facilities to face this disaster and at the same time, the aspect of weather forecasting must be more accurate and early so that we can provide early information.

"When we know early, we can also deploy personnel such as the military, firemen and other agencies much earlier so that when the water level rises, we have a bigger capacity," he said at a media conference at the Flood Operations Centre for the Pekan Parliamentary constituency at Baitul Rahah, here Saturday.

Also present were his wife, Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, Pahang Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Adnan Yaakob and Science, Technology and Innovations Minister Datuk Dr Ewon Ebin.

He also suggested that the Tenaga Nasional Berhad (TNB) sub-stations be built on higher ground so that they would not be affected each time a flood breaks out.

At the same time, Najib said a group of experts had been directed to make a study on the actual cause of extraordinary floods especially in the East Coast states.

He said this was to enable preventive measures to be taken to avoid a recurrence of the disaster whether in the short-term or long-term.

"We want to know what were the factors that caused the large-scale flood this time, when we know the source, only then can we determine how to prepare national development so that it will not bring about negative impacts on the environment to the extent of causing such a disaster.

"It may not necessarily be due to logging activities or land exploitation alone, but a combination of various factors, that's why this major flood occurred," he said.

Najib said the flood management this time was divided into three levels, namely assistance for the flood victims, cleaning up the schools and other public facilities so that they could be operational as usual, besides focusing on rebuilding the homes that were destroyed.

He said that priority this time would be given to the building of new homes for victims who had lost their houses and having their own land, while those living in squatter areas would be referred to the respective state governments to provide a suitable settlement area for them.

Meanwhile in his speech at the National Youth Vocational Institute (IKBN) Paloh Hinai, Pekan, Najib said the people must have a new perspective in facing natural disasters by being responsible in reducing the causes of floods through compliance of the laws specified.

"We also point fingers at the government if there are weaknesses in tackling the disasters, but it is actually the joint responsibility of the people to observe the law and regulations.

"If a particular area has been approved for felling and agricultural cultivation, we must obey the law. If the approval is for one acre, don't open up one acre plus another four.

"The other four acres become illegal land," he said at the handing over of contributions for schooling aid from the Pahang Foundation to 260 students who were affected at the evacuation centre.

Likewise, he said, the same was also true in mining activities and land opening for agriculture, the guidelines for sustainable development must be complied with to prevent the effects of environmental pollution on the people.

However, Najib said, in the disaster that occurred, he felt relieved when it succeeded to unite the various strata of society in the country regardless of race and religion when aid arrived in the affected states endlessly.

In addition, the Prime Minister reminded the flood victims to pay attention to health especially in the aspects of nutrition.

"I should have come for the visit much earlier but I too became a flood victim when I had e-coli infection and had to stay home. If possible, I do not want to go through the same experience again.

"That's why I want to remind you, if you have to drink, make sure the water is clean and has been boiled. The same goes for food, make sure they have been properly cleaned and cooked," he said.

-- BERNAMA

Copyright © 2014 BERNAMA

Source :<http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v7/newsindex.php?id=1099584>