

**Flood Forecasting Seven Days Ahead As Part of Flood Mitigation - Zahid
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PUTRAJAYA, Aug 12 (Bernama) -- Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said, among measures to be taken as outlined in the flood mitigation action plan for the three east coast states, is to provide flood forecasting seven days ahead.

The plan focuses on the three east coast states of Pahang, Terengganu and Kelantan which had been affected by floods every year.

"The forecast announcement will be made by the Malaysian Meteorological Department (MET) in an effort to reduce loss of lives, damage to properties, infrastructure and public facilities, compared to the usual one day in advance," he said after chairing the High-level Committee meeting on Disaster Management here today.

Ahmad Zahid, who is also Home Minister, said beginning this year, October has been chosen as National Preparedness Month in facing flood disaster with the La Nina phenomenon expected to hit from August to October and ending in the first quarter of next year (2017).

He was however informed by MET that the floods this year would not be as bad as the floods experienced by the country in 2014.

"We will also inform the public to cooperate in making early preparations for the flood season, highlighting that the 24-hour flood forecast given earlier was not sufficient as it had hampered evacuation operation and management of the flood victims," he said.

In the meantime as a long-term measure to reduce the risk of flooding in country Ahmad Zahid said, the Natural Resources and Environment Ministry had proposed a national flood mitigation plan to the committee.

"The cost of this flood mitigation plan is very costly which is about RM36 billion but it must be planned from now.

"Preliminary and feasibility studies have already been carried out but no funds have been allocated for the moment as we are not able to afford it yet," he said.

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