

Wan Junaidi: RM40 billion needed for flood mitigation

AN estimated RM40 billion is needed to finance flood-mitigation programmes, Parliament was told yesterday.

Natural Resources and Environment Minister Datuk Seri Dr Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar said the amount could balloon to RM60 billion if the programmes were not implemented in due time.

"The flood-mitigation cost is based on a study and in accordance with our report on climate change to the international community," he said when winding up the debate on the 2017 Budget at the committee-level for his ministry.

Wan Junaidi said the government would prioritise flood-mitigation projects in critical areas.

He said this was a difficult decision as many states would insist that their areas were more flood-prone than others.

He said the government had approved RM1.4 billion for flood-mitigation projects in Kelantan, Penang and Sabah under the 11th Malaysia Plan.

Of the amount, he said, RM872 million was for Kelantan, and Sabah (RM377 million) and Penang (RM150 million).

He said two projects to be implemented in Kelantan were an integrated development of Sungai Golok at a cost of RM300 million and a similar programme at the delta of Sungai Kelantan (RM572 million).

"The projects include components of flood mitigation and pro-



Flash floods inundate Rantau Panjang, Kota Baru, two years ago. File pic

tection of beaches."

As for Penang, he said, the allocation would be used to implement mitigation and development programmes at the delta of Sungai Pinang.

"The issue on allocation to solve flood problems in Penang is considered solved with the approval of RM150 million."

He said the new flood-mitigation project in Sabah involved locations in Sungai Moyog, Lido and Sungai Gulong-gurong.

"It is not the responsibility of the

ministry to resolve issues on flash floods in urban areas, but the Federal Government has given us the mandate to assist affected states."

Wan Junaidi said the mitigation projects would be carried out in stages, adding that not all the funds would be channelled by the Federal Government.

"For instance, we have deals with the private sector, such as land swap under a smart partnership programme."

He said many states had asked for

additional funds, but none received the full amount as requested.

"We will focus more on Kelantan. They will get a lot more allocation to mitigate flash floods."

On a related note, Wan Junaidi said the ministry would implement a new forecast system to notify the public of impending floods.

"The current system can only alert the public six hours before floods hit.

"But with the new system, we can forecast floods seven days in advance." **By Nik Imran Abdullah**