

Rivers, drains need de-silting

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Johor also considers expanding capacity of dams, will seek RM200mil

BATU PAHAT: Hundreds of rivers and drains in the state will have to be de-silted following the two rounds of floods recently.

Mentri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman said they were also considering the need to expand the capacity of dams.

"We will submit a request to the Federal Government for an initial funding of RM200mil. We will carry out works within five to six months. We cannot wait too long as we run the risk of floods recurring," he said.

State Drainage and Irrigation Department (DID) acting director Chong Chee Han said the draft for the proposal should be ready in two months.

Abdul Ghani was in Parit Bintang and Senggarang to oversee DID operations, where water from irrigation channels are being pumped into the Straits of Malacca.

To date, seven pumps are being used to drain water out of the waterlogged Batu Pahat district.

The pumps have been running round the clock since December, when the first wave of floods hit Johor, and only shut down for maintenance works.

Three pumps are on their way from Ipoh while another is being acquired from Kota Tinggi.

Abdul Ghani said they were also considering a way to channel water from Sungai Sembrong, Sungai



Overseeing ops: Abdul Ghani checking on the pipes used to pump water from Sungai Senggarang into the Straits of Malacca in Johor yesterday.

Bekok and Sungai Simpang Kanan to Sungai Senggarang, which flows into the Straits of Malacca.

"Right now, the three rivers flow into Sungai Batu Pahat, which then

flows into the Straits. This means there is only one outlet for the water to flow into the sea," he said.

Meanwhile, state Agriculture,

Heritage, and Rural Development Committee chairman Ahmad Zahri Jamil has dismissed reports that the Sembrong Dam was not well maintained.

"Regular maintenance has been carried out at the dam. On Jan 18, the contractor also started to clear the weeds that grew along Sungai Sembrong," he said.