

# Excess dam water must go

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## Azmi: This won't cause further flooding in Batu Pahat

**BATU PAHAT:** Only the Bekok Dam is still releasing excess water and this will not cause further flooding in Batu Pahat.

Natural Resources and Environment Minister Datuk Seri Azmi Khalid said water from the nearby dams was released into rivers but this did not cause the floodwater level here to rise.

He said the Drainage and Irrigation Department (DID) had no choice but to release the water because the water level now was above the dam's holding capacity.

"If the dam fails under the pressure, the destruction it will cause will be bad," he said.

However, he said the DID was now only releasing water from the Bekok Dam while the flow from the Sembrong, Labong and Machap dams had been closed over the last two days.

"The level at the Bekok Dam is still 1.28m above the safe level and although the difference in level is small, the volume of water is huge.

"We will need to release water for at least seven days to bring it to a safe level before we can close the dam," he told reporters after visiting the flood relief centre at SK Seri Bunut in Parit Raja here.

The minister had earlier taken a

helicopter ride to look at the dams and affected rivers together with DID officials.

Azmi said the DID had installed five centrifugal pumps in Senggaram and two in Peserai to pump the water directly into the sea to help the floodwaters recede.

Azmi said one of the main reasons for the severe flooding in Johor was heavily silted rivers and drains.

He said although the heavy rainfall (three times higher than normal) caused the flooding, silted rivers and blocked drains compounded the problem.

"We advise the public not to throw rubbish into rivers and drains,

as this will cause pollution, water-borne diseases and contribute to flooding," he said.

Azmi added that developers and contractors involved in land clearing must install silt traps to avoid silting in rivers and water channels.

"A lot of rivers around the country are experiencing this problem," he said.

"Almost all our water channels are silted up due to various reasons including littering and logging," Azmi said, adding that the Government was looking into ways of tackling the problem in the long term.