

RM3.6b to tackle Johor floods

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KUALA LUMPUR: The government is expected to spend at least RM3.6 billion to prevent floods in Johor.

A report on the projects was submitted to the government last week and it is expected to give the go-ahead soon.

Deputy Natural Resources and Environment Minister Datuk S. Sothinathan said Johor had been divided into six zones, and projects for each zone is expected to cost between RM600 million and RM1.5 billion.

The zones are classified under Muar, Batu Pahat, Mersing, Kluang, Iskandar and Sungai Johor.

“We acknowledge it is a huge amount but these measures are long term. In the recent floods, we spent about RM1.5 billion to bring life back to normal in the affected areas. This does not include the personal loss of residents and damage to goods and property.

“Instead of spending about RM1.5 billion every year, it is better to spend a big amount one time to save on future expenses.”

Sothinathan said the projects would complement the non-structural approaches, such as mapping and demarcation of flood-prone areas, that were currently being planned by the government.

Sothinathan was speaking after the East and Southeast



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*Datuk S. Sothinathan,
Deputy Natural Resources and
Environment Minister*

Asia Regional Seminar on Flood Hazard Mapping here yesterday.

Also present was director-general of the Drainage and Irrigation Department

Datuk Paduka Keizrul Abdullah. More than 40 participants from eight countries are taking part in the three-day seminar.

Keizrul said the flood mitigation projects in Johor would be an extension of existing drainage projects, costing some RM250 million, financed by the World Bank several years ago.

He said the work would include deepening and widening of rivers, constructing flood bypass and building dams.

Keizrul said usually such projects would take between eight and 18 months to get approval from the government.

“But due to the urgency of the matter, we are hoping to start work within the next three months,” he added.