

# Smart Tunnel for state?

**VIABLE VENTURE:** It can resolve Kelantan's year-round flood woes, says DPM

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THE government is looking into setting up a project similar to the Stormwater Management and Road Tunnel, better known as the Smart Tunnel, in Kelantan.

This, said Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, was geared towards resolving not only the state's year-end flood woes, but also year-round flooding issues.

Speaking on the sidelines of the third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction on Saturday, here, he said the government would be conducting a thorough study to determine whether it was a viable venture.

"We need to provide the best solutions in ways to mitigate both

extraordinary and normal flood situations in the country.

"The east coast floods late last year proved that a new system of moving excess floodwaters is needed in those states," he told the *New Straits Times*.

He said the Malaysian delegates here would not only be sharing the country's experience in handling disaster situations and future policies, but also to get more insights and ideas in implementing a more robust disaster risk management system.

Muhyiddin, who is also the National Disaster Management Committee chairman, said Malaysia had been conducting research on the best systems, with suggestions that a dam near Kemaman would

be most suitable for Terengganu.

The east coast floods, which hit Kelantan, Terengganu and Pahang from December to January, saw more than 200,000 people affected and 21 dead.

It has been described as among the worst floods to hit Malaysia in decades.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim said the presence of a Smart Tunnel in Kelantan would prove beneficial in more ways than one.

"It would help mitigate flood situations, as well as improve the people's daily needs, such as easing traffic congestion and enabling a faster route for travel.

"There are two components of this tunnel where it is both a smart tunnel and motorway tunnel.

"This was clearly proven with our first tunnel, which begins at Kampung Berembang lake near the Sungai Klang, Ampang, and ends at Tasik Taman Desa near Sungai

Kerayong in Salak South."

Shahidan, who also oversees the National Security Council, said the Federal Government would also carry out discussions with the Kelantan government about land acquisition and the timeline of the proposed project.

"Kelantan will need to provide the land, of course, but all costs will be borne by the Federal Government," he said, adding that the location of the project had yet to be decided.

He said it would need to be a strategic place where water could flow back into the river or sea.

Kuala Lumpur's Smart Tunnel project, which began construction in 2003 and was completed in 2007, had cost about RM1.8 billion.

At 9.7km long, it is the longest stormwater tunnel in Southeast Asia and the second longest in Asia.

Its main objective was to solve the flash floods problem in the city and reduce traffic jams along Jalan Sungai Besi and Loke Yew flyover at Pudu during rush hour.

EXCLUSIVE