

Close watch on three major rivers

Authorities working on early detection system to monitor flow of floods

By **RAHIMY RAHIM**

rahimyr@thestar.com.my

KUALA LUMPUR: Three major rivers are under close watch by the authorities, with a two-day flood advance warning system being put in place to alert the public.

Natural Resources and Environment Minister Datuk Seri Dr Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar said they had identified parts of Sg Kelantan, Sg Terengganu and Sg Pahang that were prone to flooding.

They were also upgrading the flood detection and warning system at the rivers, and the data would be updated every 15 minutes instead of every hour, he said.

“Our early warning system will alert the relevant agencies before sending an alert via text message to give the public time to evacuate to safer ground,” he said.

Dr Wan Junaidi was speaking at the launch of the Preparation for Monsoon Season programme at the

Smart Control Centre of the Department of Irrigation and Drainage (DID), near Kampung Berembang, yesterday.

He said the preparation was important because some 460,000 victims were forced to relocate during last year’s floods in the east coast.

It was the worst floods in the nation’s history and the agriculture sector was severely affected.

Kelantan, Pahang, Terengganu, Perak, Sabah and Sarawak were the worst hit and more than 20 people died in the disaster.

In Kelantan, the floods caused an estimated RM200mil in damages while losses in the agricultural sector nationwide amounted to RM297.83mil.

“Although it may not be as bad as the previous year, we are on standby due to our terrible experience,” said Dr Wan Junaidi.

He said the intensity this year may not be as severe due to the El Nino and La Nina phenomena

which lower the risk of massive floods.

He said the DID was inspecting its assets, drains, communications equipment and water pumps to ensure all were in good working order.

“We hope developers and stakeholders in the agriculture sector will give us their full cooperation during the inspections, we do not want any debris in the drainage systems,” he said.

Dr Wan Junaidi noted that the Government has allocated RM730mil under the 11th Malaysia Plan for flood mitigation and post-flood operations.

More than 450 rainfall and water data centres across the country are monitoring the flood situation 24 hours a day.

Some 440 warning sirens are being set up at flood-prone areas.

For details, go to publicinfobanjir.water.gov.my or call the DID Careline, 1300 801 010.



Safety measures: (From left) Dr Wan Junaidi being briefed by Natural Resources and Environment Ministry secretary-general Datuk Seri Azizah Ahmad at the Smart Control Centre near Kampung Berembang, Ampang.