

Flood preparations a continuous priority: Zaliha

THE authorities have made flood preparations, especially to tackle flash floods in the capital, a continuous priority, particularly after Malaysia assumed the Asean Chairmanship from Laos during the Asean Summit on Oct 11.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Federal Territories) Dr. Zaliha Mustafa stated that this takes into account Kuala Lumpur's role as the nation's main gateway, as well as its status as the capital and a regional economic hub.

"Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) is responsible for the beautification and well-being of Kuala Lumpur as we prepare for the Asean Chairmanship in 2025 and Visit Malaysia Year 2026.

"This preparedness requires a coordinated effort, which is the responsibility not only of DBKL as the local authority but also involves other agencies, including the Department of Irrigation and Drainage, the Malaysian Meteorological Department, SWCorp (Solid Waste Management and Public Cleansing Corporation), and Alam Flora," she said during minister's question

time in the Dewan Rakyat.

She was responding to a question from Onn Abu Bakar (PH-Batu Pahat), who asked about Kuala Lumpur's readiness for the Asean Chairmanship 2025 and Visit Malaysia Year 2026, given that the flash floods issue has yet to be resolved and could affect the country's image.

Dr. Zaliha said that DBKL is maintaining 15 open flood retention ponds and nine underground closed ponds to address flash floods in the medium term.

"All flood retention ponds have undergone regular desiltation as needed. Roadside drains have also been upgraded to improve drainage capacity and reduce the impact of flash floods," she explained.

Regarding long-term measures, she noted that seven flood mitigation projects were completed in 2022 and 2023, while 14 projects are planned for this year, with two completed, four underway, and eight at the tender analysis stage.

Addressing an additional question from Onn regarding the delay of security teams during the recent flash floods in the city,

Dr. Zaliha said the claim was inaccurate.

"On that day, the Malaysian Meteorological Department reported that the rain began at 8.30 am and stopped around 10.45 am. Within that two hours and 15 minutes, the teams from the Department of Irrigation and Drainage and DBKL were already on-site, working to redirect water flow and assist with drainage," she said.

To an additional question from Datuk Mumtaz Md Nawi (PN-Tumpat) regarding Malaysia's preparations for Asean Smart Cities, she stated that the ministry plans to enhance the existing smart city programme modules.

"We already have a smart city programme in Kuala Lumpur as part of our preparation for the Asean Chairmanship, and we will improve the existing modules to ensure that safety and traffic congestion issues are addressed," she added.

She also said work is underway to transform one of the capital's heritage buildings, the Kuala Lumpur Gallery, into a National Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Centre. - Bernama