

Monsoon ready

> MMC-Gamuda JV sets up flood mitigation plan

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SEBERANG PERAI: MMC-Gamuda Joint Venture (MGJV), the developer of the Ipoh-Padang Besar Electrified Double Track Project has initiated a six-point flood mitigation plan in the northern states in view of the upcoming monsoon season.

MGJV director Datuk Azmi Mat Nor said the plan was mooted to ensure that the company was prepared to work with federal and state agencies if floods occurred in the project's areas.

He said the main thrust of the plan was to ensure all rivers, drains, culverts and waterways within the project's area were free from obstruction to ensure smooth water flow.

The company is deploying various vehicles from earth movers to excavators to clear any obstruction which may occur due to heavy rains.

He said MGJV had also identified low-lying areas which may be inundated during heavy rains in Penang, Perak and Kedah so these areas could be monitored.

"In addition, an emergency command centre and 24-hour on-call fully-equipped emergency response teams have been set-up and deployed at low-lying areas so they can be the first on the scene during emergencies," he said at a media

briefing yesterday. Some 2,000 workers will be deployed for the flood mitigation plan.

Last year, the RM1.3 billion project was blamed for the flooding in Kedah during the monsoon season in November, last year. This prompted the Penang government to direct the Seberang Perai Municipal Council to issue a stop-work order on the project.

The order was subsequently lifted after the company complied with requirements.

Azmi said the company would collect data from meteorological stations and the information would be disseminated to the response team for further action.

"An emergency hotline at 1-300-80-1999 has been set up so to disseminate information to the public and to receive complaints," he said.

On backflow of rivers caused by heavy rain and high tides, MGJV general manager Szeto Wai Loong said the company was working closely with the Drainage and Irrigation Department to monitor the situation.

"We will warn the people in the area and help them if the tidal gates and pumps have reached their capacity and flooding happens."

Work on the 328km-long double-tracking project started in 2008 and is expected to be completed by November 2014. The project involves building bridges, tunnels and new double-track lines traversing the northern states of Perlis, Kedah, Penang and Perak.