

Experts suggest ways to tackle Sg Golok river basin project woes

KUALA LUMPUR: Following damage to the embankments of the Sungai Golok Integrated River Basin Development Project (PLSB) in Rantau Panjang, Kelantan recently, experts have suggested flood mitigation measures that include collaboration with Thailand and emulating successful overseas models.

Universiti Putra Malaysia Forestry and Environmental Faculty senior lecturer Dr Mohd Yusoff Ishak said the governments of Malaysia and Thailand should collaborate on the project to rectify

the damaged embankments.

He said the issue arose due to the flood mitigation projects not being synchronised by both parties, and the Thai government had implemented their project first.

“The Sungai Golok flood mitigation project affects both Malaysia and Thailand. So we must have more frequent discussions on disaster management, and work closely with the Thai government,” he told Bernama.

On Dec 28, the media reported that an estimated 50m stretch of

the embankment at the Sungai Golok PLSB in Kampung Lanchang gave way due to strong river currents.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim was also quoted as saying that both governments had agreed to expedite the widening and deepening of the Sungai Golok project at the border.

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia senior lecturer (Geology Engineering and Soil Mechanics) Dr Nor Shahidah Mohd Nazer said the government’s plan to widen and deepen Sungai Golok

is an appropriate measure to resolve the issue and ensure long-term capacity.

“However, the government must be careful of unremoved sediment build-up that could cause the river to become shallow and reduce water flow capacity. This could lead to overflow in other low flood-risk areas,” she said.

She added that the government should also emulate several overseas flood mitigation projects such as the “Metropolitan Outer Area Underground Discharge

Channel” in Japan, which does not affect surface levels and can hold a large volume of water temporarily.

“We can also use the Marina Barrage technique used in Singapore. An interesting feature of this technique is that it can control both river and sea overflows.

“The Netherlands’ ‘Maaspark Ooijen-Wanssum’ is another example. It is a large-scale water catchment area that mimics a natural overflow ecosystem that does not use conventional flood mitigation techniques,” she said.