KEMENTERIAN TENAGA DAN SUMBER ASLI

KERATAN SURAT KHABAR

SURAT KHABAR	:	STAR METRO			
TARIKH	:	5/1/2022 (RABU)	MUKA SURAT	:	4
JABATAN	:	UMUM			





The landslide in Jalan Palimbayan Indah in Kampung Sungai Penchala on Dec 20, 2021 affected 284 residents. — Filepic

(Far left) Residents of four blocks in Seri Duta 1 Condominium who were affected by a landslide were advised to evacuate. — Photo courtesy of DBKL

'Recent landslides mostly in older neighbourhoods'

Soil structure and heavy, continuous rains main causes of incidents, says KL mayor

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THE recent spate of landslides in Kuala Lumpur occurred mostly in older neighbourhoods, where there has not been any development for decades, the Kuala Lumpur mayor says.

Datuk Seri Mahadi Che Ngah said the majority of areas that experienced landslides were older townships like Bangsar and Taman Duta, with no construction sites located nearby.

"As such, it is wrong to blame overdevelopment for these occurrences," he said.

He added that some areas in Bangsar Indah, the landslide occurred on vacant land.

"A lot of it has to do with the soil structure of the area," Mahadi said, explaining that the amount of water the earth could hold depended on the type of soil.

"Soil with a lot of clay and silt can hold more water. Loose soil structure, on the other hand, won't be able to absorb water and this can result in slope failure after a continuous downpour."

The mayor said that since Dec 18, over 80 areas in Kuala Lumpur were affected by landslides precipitated by the continuous heavy rains that weakened the soil structure.

One of the worst landslides in the city was at Jalan Palimbayan Indah in Kampung Sungai Penchala.

"This is an old area with kampung-style houses on steep slopes with no proper infrastructure like drainage.

"These houses were built haphazardly many years ago and over time, heavy rains had loosened the earth, resulting in landslides.

"In fact, before this incident, we installed shotcrete walls along an affected stretch to control erosion. Houses there were not affected by the recent incident," Mahadi told *StarMetro*.

Areas like Taman Duta, Bangsar and Bukit Damansara — which are located on slopes and have not been developed for the past 20 years — were also affected, he noted.

"In these areas, the landslide was not the result of human activity like development or tree cutting, but due to gravity and friction from soil movement and constant rains," he said.

Though some have blamed the recent flooding on overdevelopment, Mahadi pointed out that new projects had been designed to cater to the likelihood of such incidents.

"We have already planned for new buildings to be flood-resilient and equipped with infrastructure such as drainage and storage facilities to hold water and divert any excess during heavy rains.

"That is how we control the discharge so that existing facilities like drains and monsoon drains would not be affected by the excess water."

Mahadi said the only time the infrastructure could not withstand an overflow was when the volume of water was overwhelmingly high due to continuous rains that exceeded the capacity of the drains.

On the city's flood mitigation projects, he said 173 flood hotspots had been identified since 2019.

Many of the areas face drainage issues and are unable to cope with the capacity of the water and rubbish, he said.

"From 173, we zoomed in on 39 critical areas. Work is ongoing to improve the infrastructure there," he said.

Mahadi also said there were 22 major projects ongoing, with some in Cheras near the MRT station and Jalan Duta, while the one at Universiti Malaya had been completed.

These areas were not affected by the recent floods.

"I was informed by the DID (Drainage and Irrigation Department) that what happened on Dec 18 and 19 was beyond anything they had expected or anticipated.

"The annual rainfall in Kuala Lumpur is 2,400mm, but on Dec 18 the rainfall exceeded the average rainfall for a month and this occurs only once in every 100 years.

"And if that happens, we need to review the designs for future developments since we can no longer rely on the data based on 100 years anymore.

"Bottom line is we have to accept the fact that climate change and global warming are going to play a major role in increasing the risk of flooding in the future.

"We all need to play a role to counter or mitigate that," he concluded.



Mahadi: Over 80 areas in Kuala Lumpur were affected by landslides since Dec 18.