

Scrapping of park project a wise move

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has described as wise the Kedah Government's decision to scrap the proposed RM17 billion Jerai International Park project.

He said it was the policy of the Government to prevent the authorities from undertaking projects which were against the strong wishes of the people.

He said the Government also acquired large tracts of land in Langkawi for tourism projects but there were no protests from the landowners.

The Government also reclaimed land from the sea so that it did not have to acquire land which had been given grants and so on, Dr Mahathir said.

He was speaking to reporters after presenting excellent service awards to Home Ministry staff at the Prime Minister's Department today.

When making the announcement, Menteri Besar Tan Sri Osman Arof said the State Government's decision was in compliance with the wishes of the people.

Dr Mahathir had earlier asked the State Government to review the project. He said the people's opinion should be sought and feasibility studies be carried out before embarking on the project.

In future, State Govern-

ments should ascertain the capability of companies which made proposals for undertaking large projects and how these projects would affect the people, especially landowners, he added.

Asked to comment on Barisan Nasional secretary-general Datuk Mohamed Rahmat's statement that the general election was drawing near, Dr Mahathir

said it would take about two years to make preparations for the election.

He said it was necessary to make preparations so that the BN could spring some surprises.

"I hope the opposition party will also make preparations and invest heavily for the election."

Asked to comment on a Filipino initiative to set up a North Asia Growth Polygon

comprising Northern Luzon, Taiwan, Hong Kong, South China and possibly, Okinawa in south Japan, Dr Mahathir said it was up to them to implement it.

"We have our own plan and it will not affect ours."

Earlier, in his speech Dr Mahathir urged civil servants to continue to strive for excellence to improve the efficiency of the civil service.

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