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LEAD Mahathir

JOHOR CAUSEWAY MIGHT BE DEMOLISHED

JOHOR BAHRU, July 5 (Bernama) -- The Johor Causeway, linking the country with Singapore since 1924, might be demolished and replaced with a bridge, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said this is the hope of the government and the Johor government to see the waters flow again from the east to west and vice-versa with ships using the Tebrau Straits.

Speaking at the launching of the RM6 billion JB Waterfront City project, Dr Mahathir said it could materialise or it could not.

"But it will not be wrong to make the preparations from now by not closing down the shipping routes in the Tebrau Straits," he added.

"Maybe one day, big ships can pass through and the Tebrau Straits reverts back to its natural state."

A bridge, referred to as the Second Link, linking Johor Baharu and Singapore (Tuas) is under construction.

Dr Mahathir also hoped that the Tebrau Straits could a waterway that could be used by Johore residents.

The JB Waterfront City project, covering 48 hectares in the Tebrau Straits, is expected to be fully completed between 2006 and 2011.

The project, providing a new commercial centre for Johor Baharu, is developed by Johor Coastal Development Sdn Bhd, a subsidiary of Pilecon Engineering Bhd.

The JB Waterfront City project, which employs new building technology without the need for land reclamation, received praises from Dr Mahathir.

However, he hoped that the project would be constructed to far out in the Tebrau Straits that it would block shipping routes.

"Big ships hopefully could one day pass through here," he added.

Dr Mahathir said the new concept in construction, where piles were driven for the needed support, could be exported to islands nations.

He said the technique could also be used in the construction of buildings and runways over waters. -- BERNAMA

THG ABG