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Abu Zahar will propose Malacca as site for bridge

MALACCA, Sun. - Chief Minister Datuk Abu Zahar Isnin said he would suggest to the Federal Government that the proposed bridge linking Peninsular Malaysia and Sumatra be built in Malacca.

Abu Zahar said the bridge could be built in Kuala Linggi which is about 30km from Merlimau and about 48km from Sumatra.

"A working paper on the proposal is being prepared by State Secretary Datuk Wira Abdul Rahman Jamal," he said.

He was speaking to reporters after opening the Alor Gajah Umno division delegates conference in Masjid Tanah today.

He added that a committee comprising officers from the State Economic Planning Unit, Marine Department and the Public Works Department had also been formed to study the viability of the project.

"They met recently to discuss details of the location which we feel is appropriate because of its distance from Sumatra."

Abu Zahar also said the State Government would discuss with representatives from the Johor and Negri Sembilan Governments to get their support.

"If our proposal is accepted, it will help expedite the development of the Kuala Linggi and Merlimau industrial corridor," he added.

Abu Zahar said the proposal would be forwarded to the Government "very soon."

Earlier this month, Malaysia and Indonesia unveiled plans to build a bridge across the Malacca Straits.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad disclosed this after talks with President Suharto of Indonesia on June 15 when attending the inaugural summit of the Heads of Government of the group of eight Islamic developing nations.

Dr Mahathir had said making the proposed bridge a reality would depend on a feasibility study being undertaken.

However, he did not give details on the proposed bridge. The Straits of Malacca separates Peninsular Malaysia from Sumatra and is one of Southeast Asia's most vital trading routes.

Presently, ferry services link the two regions through Kukup in Johor, Malacca and Penang.

(END)