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Kedah plans landing strips for light planes

GURUN, Wed. - The State Government is planning to build landing strips for light aircraft in three districts to encourage the people to take up flying, State Transport and Consumer Affairs Committee chairman Datuk Beh Heng Seong said yesterday.

He said among the districts being considered by the State Government were Kota Star, Kulim and Sungai Petani.

However, he said the project would only take off once the State Government had succeeded in inculcating interest among the people of Kedah in aviation.

For a start, Beh said the State Government would set up remote-controlled aircraft flying societies in selected schools.

"We will approach the schools and invite them to set up the societies to nurture the pupils' interest in aviation.

"Through these societies, we will be able to teach the pupils aviation. For example, they will learn about aircraft parts if they learn how to assemble a toy aircraft.

"At least, for example, they know what a rudder is," he told reporters after presenting hampers to 45 poor families from his Gurun State constituency at his service centre.

Beh said the State Government would liaise with the Education and Youth and Sports Ministries to ensure the project's success.

The programme to nurture the interest of the public on aviation was conceived by Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Sanusi Junid.

Beh said the State Government was confident that the project would be a success as it had proven so in the United States.

"It is normal in the United States where individuals fly daily in their private light aircraft.

"Many Malaysians can afford to buy a light aircraft as it costs around RM100,000 each," he added.

Beh said the State Government would also invite the private sector to be involved in the project.

"They could assist by sponsoring the project."

Beh added the State Government had started looking into the possibility of constructing a speed railway track from Alor Star to Butterworth.

Beh said he had also written to Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik on the matter.

The idea for the speed train for the two destinations was proposed by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

During his visit to Kedah on Jan 9, Dr Mahathir had proposed that the State Government take advantage of its flat terrain by introducing a speed train service from Alor Star to Butterworth.

He said the flat terrain in Kedah enabled the construction of straight railway tracks which would permit a train to travel at 170km per hour.

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