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Lada to ensure proper sand importation

SUNGAI PETANI, Thurs. - The appointment of Langkawi Development Authority as the sole importer of sand for Kedah's land reclamation project in Kuala Muda will ensure the importation from Indonesia is done properly.

Menteri Besar Tan Sri Sanusi Junid said Lada's role would also help stabilise the price of sand quoted by prospective suppliers.

It was learnt that the prices quoted by 15 firms from Aceh and other parts of Sumatra ranged between RM14.50 and RM25 a cubic metre.

The reclamation project is expected to create 20,300ha of reclaimed land and it was estimated that some 9.2 billion cubic metres of fill material, mostly sand, would be required.

Sanusi said the exact amount of sand needed to be imported would depend on how much the developers could get from sand to be collected through the suction method from the seabed.

Speaking after meeting housing developers at Cinta Sayang Golf and Country Club two days ago, Sanusi said Lada was now officially the sole importer of sand for the reclamation project, following a proposal from Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"This was decided before the Prime Minister left for his holiday."

The Menteri Besar said Lada received proposals from seven companies, of which six originated from one company.

"Lada is awaiting orders from people who are reclaiming the land. But the developer are still awaiting word from the experts on how much sand it would need (for the project) as the amount could only be determined once how much sand can be obtained through the suction method is confirmed.

"The first part of the requirement, however, will first be satisfied by sand sucked up from the bottom of the sea... only the balance will be imported."

Meanwhile, it was also learnt that some 30 companies had indicated their interest to import sand to the developer of the reclamation project, Kuala Lumpur-based Samudera Baru Darul Aman Sdn Bhd.

Sanusi, also Lada co-chairman, said barges would be used to transport sand to Kedah.

He said Lada would ensure only non-leaking barges were used to prevent pollution of the Straits of Malacca.

"Using barges is the only way ... We cannot use ships to transport the sand because that would be more expensive," he added.

It was also learnt that the National Hydraulic Research Institute of Malaysia and relevant departments like Environment, Drainage and Irrigation and Agriculture and the Kedah Land and Mines office had already given Lada guidelines on sand importation.

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