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New admin capital for Johor being planned

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JOHOR BARU, Tues. - The Johor Government is planning a new administrative capital called "Johor Perdana" in Kota Tinggi, about 48km from here.

Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman said a site along the Johor River had been identified for the massive project.

All major government offices here, including the State Secretariat in Bukit Timbalan, will be moved to Johor Perdana when the project is ready.

The move is in line with plans to decentralise the administrative functions of the State Government and ease over-crowding and traffic congestion in the city here.

Ghani said a RM300 million bridge across Sungai Johor in Kota Tinggi would be built as part of the waterfront capital city project. Work on the bridge is scheduled to start this year.

The new capital, it is learnt, will be built on land now owned by three major plantations.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who was shown the site during his last visit to Johor in February, is said to have given his approval for the project.

The State Government has commissioned Universiti Teknologi Malaysia's Institute Sultan Iskandar to draw up the development concept for Johor Perdana.

The study, called the Johor River Basin project, is expected to be ready soon.

Ghani said the Johor Perdana proposal was significant because it would spur development on Johor's east coast, which is one of the poorest and least developed areas in Johor.

The project, he added, would also have positive implications on the Indonesia-Malaysia-Singapore Growth Triangle.

"The project offers tremendous potential for business growth and infrastructure development within the IMS-GT and promotes the use of waterways along the Johor River, the Johor Straits and the South China Sea," he said.

Ghani was speaking at the opening of a two-day international conference on the IMS-GT entitled "Borderless Area for Sustainable Progress" jointly organised by the Asian Strategy and Leadership Institute and ISI here today.

He said the decision to locate Johor Perdana along the Sungai Johor in Kota Tinggi was significant because it was close to the Straits of Malacca, one of the world's busiest shipping routes.

The IMS-GT comprises Singapore; the Malaysian States of Negri Sembilan, Malacca, Johor and Pahang; and the Indonesian provinces of Riau, West Sumatra, Jambi, Bengkulu, South Sumatra, Lampung and West Kalimantan.

The IMS-GT covers a geographical area spread over 565,000sq km, with a market size of 34 million people.

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