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New airport on man-made island (HL)

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ALOR STAR, Wed. - A new international airport is to be built on a man-made island to be reclaimed off the Kuala Muda coast, about 140km from here.

The airport, modelled after the Kansai International Airport in Osaka, Japan, will be the second international airport in Kedah after Langkawi. The Sultan Abdul Halim airport here handles only domestic flights.

Menteri Besar Tan Sri Sanusi Junid said after chairing the State Executive Council meeting at Wisma Darul Aman today that the Federal Government had approved the construction of the airport.

The reclamation project, involving 6,300ha, was proposed by Kuala Lumpur-based Samudera Baru Darul Aman Sdn Bhd and approved by the State Government last month.

Sanusi said the approval for the airport was given by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on Saturday.

"We received a facsimile from the Prime Minister approving the airport project on June 7.

"The letter was faxed to us from London and we would like to thank the Federal Government for approving the international airport project," he said.

Sanusi said Dr Mahathir also wanted the project to be expedited.

Once ready, the airport will complement the Langkawi and Penang International Airports in the northern region.

The Menteri Besar also announced the State Government's approval of another reclamation project at Pulau Bunting and a power plant at Samudera Baru Darul Aman's reclaimed area.

SKS Venture Sdn Bhd is planning to build a deep water port at the island while the power plant will be built by Selangor-based Automan Power Producers Sdn Bhd.

The other project approved was the development of housing and tourism-related projects at the Kuala Muda beachfront by Sayak Beach Resort.

Sanusi said the State Government would inform Samudera Baru Darul Aman, SKS Venture and Sayak Beach Sdn Bhd of the approval for their projects.

"We have given the approval and hope the relevant agencies, including the National Hydraulic Research Institute of Malaysia and Department of Environment, will co-operate by expediting their studies on the reclamation project.

"We hope the project could start within the next three months," he added.

Asked whether the Federal Government had also approved SKS Venture's proposal to build a deep water port, he said: "We have not received any confirmation on the matter from the Federal Government.

"However, SKS claims they have the directive to go ahead with the project."

On the power plant, Sanusi said the Federal Government had approved the project, which would involve a power plant, a switching plant and coal storage yard.

The power plant will be located on a 250ha site.

On another subject, Sanusi said he had extended the term of service for the current State Executive Council by another month.

He said the Exco members would be taking their new oath on Aug 3.

Asked whether there would be a change in the Exco line-up, Sanusi said: "I will decide on that during my holiday."

Sanusi is leaving for Europe and Saudi Arabia tonight and is expected to return on June 26.

(END)