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PM against move to build bridge to Langkawi

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LANGKAWI, Sun. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is against any move to build a bridge to Langkawi from the mainland as he wants the island status to be maintained.

Disclosing this today, Kedah Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Sanusi Junid said Dr Mahathir ruled out the idea when he asked him about proposals from the private sector to build a bridge.

"The Prime Minister ruled out the idea of a bridge because he felt once we build a bridge then Langkawi will cease to be an island. The fun about Langkawi is to retain it as an island," Sanusi said when asked to comment on proposals to build a bridge.

The latest proposal was made by Executive chairman of Silver Joy Holdings Sdn Bhd William Ang who said his firm planned to submit plans to the Kedah and Perlis Governments to build a bridge linking Perlis and Langkawi.

Ang had said the proposal would be submitted after the firm completed its project to reclaim about 300ha along the coastline between Kuala Perlis and Kurong Tengar.

Silver Joy and another company, Aksi Harmoni Sdn Bhd, signed an agreement with the Perlis Government three days ago to reclaim a total of 600ha along the coastline.

Sanusi said four bridge proposals have been made by the private sector.

"There is no harm in people making such proposals for ideas may change (later)," he told reporters after presiding a meeting of the Kedah Business Council of which he is adviser.

"These proposals are nothing new as there is even one to link Malaysia with Sumatra."

Sanusi also appealed to people who have bought shophouses in Langkawi with the idea of leasing them out to lower the rent to prevent businessmen from being forced to increase prices of goods.

He said alternatively, these investors should sell their premises at reasonable prices to genuine businessmen.

"If a businessman buys a shop, then the instalment he pays for the building is not a cost to the business as it is an acquisition of asset.

"But if he rents, then the money paid is a loss and the businessman would have to put the cost of the rent into the product, thereby increasing the prices of his goods."

He said the Government has received many complaints from the island's businessmen on the high rentals.

When the shops were available, he said, the businessmen were not ready but now that they want to, they find it difficult to buy premises.

On the business council, he said the present membership of 15 would be expanded and also incorporate a wider range of business representatives.

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