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RM2b project a catalyst for Malacca

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THE construction of the RM2 billion Pulau Melaka project outside Bandar Hilir, Malacca, will serve as a catalyst for the development of future artificial island projects in the country.

Being the first artificial island project in Malaysia, its success or failure will reflect the future of this type of real estate development which utilises the principles of sea reclamation due to limited land space.

With Malacca and Kedah lining up to develop more artificial islands in the near future, the Pulau Melaka project is seen as an indicator for this new type of real estate development.

The construction of these artificial islands serves a dual purpose. Besides providing a new alternative market in the real estate business due to limited land space and a yield in price, the islands could also serve as a barrier to prevent coastal erosion a factor affecting the Malacca and Kedah coasts seriously.

Therefore, both the Kedah and Malacca State Governments are lobbying for the construction of more of these islands due to the benefit in preventing erosion.

For Malacca, the 17 artificial island projects spanning from Kuala Linggi to Sungai Rambai are in the works pending approval from a macro-Environmental Impact Assessment study.

A decision is expected to be made soon as the study was completed last month.

Hence, the importance of the Pulau Melaka project developed by Inno-Enhance Sdn Bhd, a subsidiary of Larut Consolidated Bhd, must not be undermined.

The project was launched by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in May 1996 and already, the first of the two islands and a RM10 million 300-metre bridge connecting the island with the mainland have been completed.

The recently-completed 40-hectare island consists of 1,518 shop-office units, 92 bungalow lots, 990 condominium units, 1,012 condotel units, a jetty centre, commercial and office complexes.

According to Inno-Enhance deputy general manager of marketing, Tan Bak Hai, 90 per cent of the (first) island's shop offices and 20 bungalow lots have been taken up while 30 per cent of the condotel units have been sold.

Besides this, the first artificial island would also boast of a 33-storey five-star hotel with 300 rooms.

The second `island' of almost 50 hectares will include 1,548 shop office units, 94 bungalow lots, 3,210 condominium units, service apartments, commercial and office complexes, a theme park and a recreational park.

Presently, Inno-Enhance is preparing works to reclaim 50 hectares of the sea for the construction of the second island.

Despite the current economic slowdown faced by the country, it would be interesting to see how this may have an impact on the development of these artificial islands.

Truly, the Pulau Melaka project which is expected to take seven years to develop may well be a marker or an indicator for other similar projects in the future.

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