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DPM: Putrajaya built to spur development

PENANG, Thurs. - Chiding Pas' small-mindedness on major infrastructure projects, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi today said Putrajaya, the project Pas claims it will sell if it wins in the general election, is designed as the nation's investment to kickstart greater development.

The Deputy Prime Minister said Putrajaya was built with the people in mind since the Government's new administrative centre would spur socio-economic development in the surrounding areas.

"And this includes Negri Sembilan and Malacca," he said after chairing a State Bumiputera Steering Committee meeting.

Abdullah, who is also the steering committee chairman, was commenting on a plan by Pas president Datuk Fadzil Noor to sell Putrajaya to rich kings if Pas won in the general election.

Brushing aside Fadzil's plan as petty, Abdullah, who is also Penang Umno chief, said: "That's all Pas can think of... nothing more. What else does Pas know? What does Fadzil know? To him, everything big is wasteful, so we must only build things small in size ... build houses with only one room and one window."

Abdullah said Putrajaya was not only an administrative centre or housing for the Prime Minister, Ministers and civil servants as it would also include commercial centres.

In Kuantan, Umno supreme council member Datuk Mohd Khalid Mohd Yunus slammed the attitude of Pas leaders, especially its president who said the party would auction Putrajaya if it won in the general election.

"This clearly shows that the country would be facing a problem if Pas comes to power. Now, when they (Pas) are not in power they are planning to auction Putrajaya, so if they form a government Pas may even mortgage the country."

In Cyberjaya, Education Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said Pas' objection to the development of Putrajaya and other projects reflected its lack of foresight and understanding of information technology. He said this was proof that the party was not capable of administering the country efficiently, especially in preparing to meet the challenges of the new millennium.

"We do not understand why Pas has tagged a project like Putrajaya, which is built to meet the country's future needs, as a waste.

"In the next millennium, we must be able to utilise IT. But Pas' objection shows it does not have a grasp of what the industry is all about," he said after the launching of the intelligent city of Cyberjaya by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Najib said Pas intended to create controversy and confusion among the people when it announced its intention to auction Putrajaya.

On Pas' contention that funds were wasted on mega projects, he said the Government had always ensured that the welfare and interests of the people were not neglected.

"Allocations are made for present and future projects. If we do not plan for the future now, we will lose out," he said.

In Kota Baru, State Umno liaison committee chief Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah said Umno and the Barisan Nasional had done more for the people than Pas - and it achieved this without disposing of government properties.

He said government properties such as Putrajaya were "owned by the public and built for the public" and they were not a waste of public funds

as stated by Pas.

"They can say what they like. They think it (Putrajaya) is their property and they can do what they like. If they think they want to sell the property when they become the Government, they can do so but I don't think they will gain power," he said.

Tengku Razaleigh said the people would not be swayed by Pas' promises because they knew the Government had spent a lot of money to alleviate poverty and provide scholarships.

"While Pas has done nothing for the people, Umno and the BN Government have spent a lot on providing scholarships to Malay students from villages," he added.

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