

Develop Kelantan, PM challenges Pas

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‘Deliver promise’ to bring progress

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LANGKAWI. Sun. Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today challenged the Pas Kelantan Government to deliver its oft-repeated promise of developing the State like what the Barisan Nasional was doing in other States.

“They (Pas) said that if they were the Government, then they could do it all (to develop the State), so let them do it.

“They say they could do such as what other State Governments are doing (to bring development), so do it,” he said when met by reporters at the Langkawi International airport, shortly before his departure to Kuala Lumpur after a one-day working visit here.

He said this when asked to comment on Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah’s statement today that the Pas State administration had to lease out 50,000ha in Hulu Kelantan due to mounting financial difficulties.

He was quoted as saying the Kelantan Government had leased the land, to be developed as palm oil plantations, to 40 companies.

He alleged that as a result, many development projects in Hulu Kelantan could not be carried out, especially resettlement schemes for residents.

Tengku Razaleigh was further quoted as saying that the Pas State Government had in the past leased 380,000ha of land to a Singapore company, but the land was reclaimed by the BN Government on taking over the administration from Pas in 1980.

Asked how the Government viewed the alleged action by the Kelantan Government to lease out land in the State, Dr Mahathir said: “I don’t dare say anything more, I don’t know (much about the case), let’s wait.”

Dr Mahathir was also asked about reports today that a coalition comprising 32 non-governmental organisations had put on hold all contacts with the Malaysian Human Rights Commission (Suhakam) for 100 days, due to dissatisfaction with the commission.

The coalition, which included Hakam, Aliran, Suaram, Jemaah Islah Malaysia, Tenaganita and Sisters in Islam, was reportedly unhappy with several developments within Suhakam.

This included the appointment of Tan Sri Abu Talib Othman as the commission’s new chairman and the axing of several commissioners, which the coalition reportedly said was a threat to the credibility of Suhakam.

Dr Mahathir replied: “Let them . . . who cares about these NGOs?”

On the Gunung Machinchang ca-

ble car project, which will be the world’s longest spanning cable car six-seater gondola project, he said it would be ready on schedule and opened to the public in July.

Project consultant Dr Peter Wyss said the 2.2km cable for the project would be laid in the next 10 days.

He said 35 gondolas, each with the capacity of seating six people, would then be installed.

The RM45 million project, which began in April last year, will link the Oriental Village in Teluk Burau to the 708-metre Gunung Machinchang.

Starting from the Oriental Village shopping and food complex, the cable car gondolas will whisk visitors up through two connecting towers.

“From the second tower, the cable cars will ascend 950 metres to the middle station, where an observation platform is located.

“From there, the gondolas move to the top station located at the peak of Gunung Machinchang, where another two observation towers are available,” said Wyss.

A jungle-trekking path will link the various points of the cable car project.

Dr Mahathir earlier went on a boat ride from the Summer Palace to inspect construction work at the Harbour Park Langkawi in Teluk Burau.