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Ghani-Logistics

JOHOR WANTS TO BE REGIONAL LOGISTICS HUB

BATU PAHAT, May 9 (Bernama) -- Johor will continue to develop its infrastructures in efforts to become the region's integrated logistics hub, said Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman today.

He said its modern land transport system, Port of Tanjung Pelepas (PTP) and Senai Airport would place Johor on a viable and competitive platform in the region.

"Construction of roads, highways and various other infrastructures in Johor is to make the state a more competitive and strategic choice for international investors".

He told reporters this after performing the ground breaking for the Batu Pahat-Air Hitam-Kluang road upgrading project here today.

Works Minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu and Public Works Department (JKR) Director-General Datuk Zaini Omar were also present.

The RM331 million project involves the upgrading of the two-lane 47km road into a dual carriageway with SP Setia Berhad as the main contractor. The project is due for completion August 2004.

Abdul Ghani said Johor had vast potential in becoming the regional logistics hub after the world's top shipping companies like Maersk Sealand and Evergreen had switched its operations to the PTP.

Meanwhile, Samy Vellu said the existence of modern roads in Johor would allow exporters easy movement of their goods to the local ports, adding that previously Johor's land routes were not efficient and economical for commercial transporters.

Upgrading of the Batu Pahat-Air Hitam-Kluang road would create an efficient transportation network between the state's industrial zones and the inland port in Segamat, he said.

He said 20,000 vehicles plied the Batu Pahat-Air Hitam-Kluang road daily, 20 per cent of them being commercial vehicles.

"I hope implementation of this project and Gemas-Air Hitam Federal Road 1 upgrading which has been agreed to by the government will move the regional exports from foreign ports to local ports," he said.

Earlier in his speech, Abdul Ghani said the federal government had agreed to construct and upgrade several other roads in the state in the immediate future.

He said among these were the Pasir Gudang road, second bridge over Muar river and the RM440 million outer ring road, implemented this year.

Abdul Ghani said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and the Finance Ministry had given their nod to the the Senai-Desaru highway project which would integrate the economy in east Johor with other areas in the state.

He said construction of all modern roads in Johor including the link between Kota Tinggi and Mersing were expected to be completed within five years.

-- BERNAMA
MHI AHH ZUL