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Capital idea

THE Kedah Government should seriously consider the proposal by the Prime Minister that Langkawi be made its new administrative capital. As Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad pointed out, the island is more developed than the present capital, Alor Star. Langkawi is now an international tourist destination, has an international airport capable of handling larger aircraft and boasts other world-class facilities.

Throughout history, capitals of countries have moved to reflect changes in the political, economic, social and cultural conditions. Berlin, the capital of the kingdom of Prussia, became the capital of a unified Germany in 1871. As a result of the division of Germany after World War II, Bonn became the provisional capital of West Germany from 1949, and continued for a time as the seat of the German federal government even after the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1990.

The Hague is the administrative capital of the Netherlands, though Amsterdam is the official capital. Ipoh, located in the tin-rich Kinta Valley, displaced Kuala Kangsar as the state capital of Perak during the British colonial administration, and Kuala Kangsar became the royal town. There were pros and cons in all such instances. On practical rather than sentimental grounds, however, the choice between old Alor Star and modern Langkawi should be an easy one.