

'100-storey tower Najib's ego trip at KL's expense'
Malaysiakini.com
October 17, 2010

Seputeh MP Teresa Kok has slammed the 100-storey Warisan Merdeka tower by Najib as the PM's ego trip at the expense of Kuala Lumpur's long term viability and is calling for the plan to be scrapped.

"Prime Minister Najib's proposal to build a 100-storey tower in the Stadium Merdeka area smacks of egotism and complete disregard for the need for sustainable urban development in Kuala Lumpur," said the DAP parliamentarian in a statement yesterday.

"Firstly, the ad hoc 100-storey tower proposal shows a lack of urban planning that will only exacerbate KL's existing traffic congestion that is the bane of every KL resident, no thanks to DBKL's couldn't-care-less attitude towards their own plot ratio requirements," said Kok (*right*).

She noted how the addition of another mega building in the area would "could cause a gridlock situation that would paralyse the entire KL city centre" in light of the traffic jams that plague Jalan Maharajalela and Jalan Kinabalu daily.

"I hope Najib does not subscribe to his Tourism Minister Ng Yen Yen's childish keeping-up-with-the-Jones reasoning," she added.

The minister had voiced her approval of the controversial tower following Najib's budget speech, saying, "There is no end because everybody wants a tallest tower. Shanghai and Taiwan wants more, so why should we hold back?"

The tourism minister felt that adding yet another tower to KL's skyline would "put Malaysia on the world map."

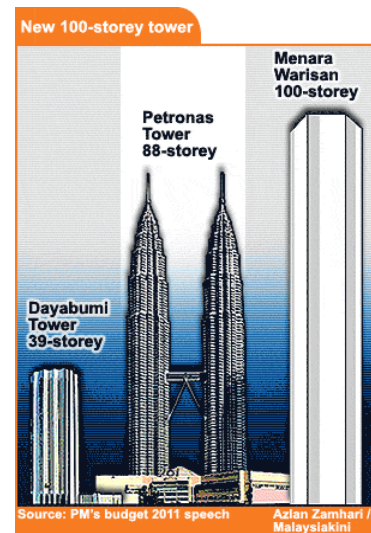
The reaction from the opposition to the budget unveiled on Friday was less enthusiastic, with from bewilderment, disappointment to downright caustic.

Trying to 'out-Mahathir Mahathir'

The Seputeh MP continued to blast the PM for failing to justify how the "phallic symbol costing RM5 billion" would help in his quest to turn Malaysia into a high-income economy.

"This princely sum of RM5 billion would be better spent towards improving public transportation in KL, which would benefit the lowest income KL-residents who need support the most," said Kok.

She expressed hope that Najib will scrap the proposal and not "sacrifice the health, safety and well-being of KL residents for the mere sake of stroking his ego."





Meanwhile Lim Kit Siang today said that the new tower shows that "Mahathir's obsession with mega projects" was "back with a vengeance" in the latest budget.

"Despite all its bombast and pyrotechnics, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak's 2011 budget is not a child of the New Economic Model but bears all the marks of old discredited policies that have landed Malaysia in the middle-income trap for more than a decade, setting the country towards a failed and bankrupt nation come 2019," said Lim.

He suggested other more achievable targets for the PM, such as raising Malaysia's "least corrupt nations" ranking or aiming for at least 10 local universities to hit the world Top 100 rankings.

"It must be asked whether Najib is secretly trying to out-Mahathir Mahathir," said the Ipoh Timor MP (*left*).

He noted sarcastically how the 88-storey RM2 billion Petronas Twin Towers in 1998 just "squeaked past Chicago Sears Towers by 22 feet" due to the building's spires, but that the glory of being the world's tallest only lasted until 2004.

Lim added that as the first budget of the New Economic Model (NEM), what the PM had revealed was "unconvincing" in the ability to transform Malaysia, blaming it on a lack of "political leadership and will" in the Najib administration to achieve the vision set out by the NEM.

'Umno's tombstone'

PAS deputy commissioner Mohammad Nizar Jamaluddin also blasted the project, warning that the Warisan Merdeka tower will be the 'tombstone' for Umno in the coming general election.

"Precious public funds are wasted on mega projects by Umno to enrich the party's cronies and to get world recognition.

"This is at the expense of the lower-income groups who form the majority of the population," pointed out the former Perak menteri besar in Ipoh today.

"Umno is more interested in publicity rather than addressing the basic needs of the people like proper housing, electricity, water supply and proper roads," lamented Nizar, who is also the PAS Bukit Gantang MP.



The PAS leader claimed that all Umno mega projects have generally turned out to be white elephant projects and a waste of public funds.

He asked, "Is Najib trying to go down in history as the prime minister who built the 100 storey building to replace Mahathir's Twin Towers as the highest structure in Malaysia?"

Another poser that the PAS leader is asking is how come Najib has no funds to give a one month bonus to civil servants, amounting to about RM3.1 billion, but has the funds for the RM5 billion tower project.

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