

**Malaysia needs mega projects, say reps**  
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Umno delegates today defended the BN-led government's penchant for multi-billion ringgit mega projects, saying such projects are a sure-fire way of attracting enough private investment to achieve the goal of becoming a high-income nation by 2020.

While seconding the motion on the economy the Umno general assembly, Youth wing deputy chief Razali Ibrahim said mega projects present a viable means for the private sector to participate in the nation's development, eventually taking over from the government in funding future projects.

"This is not using government funds. What the Prime Minister (Najib Abdul Razak) meant when announcing the projects is to push private investment," he said.

"When the government is able to transfer all this spending to the private sector, it would mean the government saves money, which in turn would go back to the people and help solve the many problems that they face."

Razali slammed the opposition for stoking public discontent against the government's mega projects, most recently against the proposed 100-storey Warisan Merdeka tower proposed in Najib's Budget 2011, saying the opposition are merely fishing for support.

Taking the example of the development of Putrajaya, which started in 1995, he said the opposition have not been consistent in their stand against government projects, shifting their positions to their convenience.

"When Putrajaya first came up, they said they would sell it off. Now they are racing to take it over. When the Penang bridge was built, they said the government would go bankrupt. Now they are asking for a second bridge.

"When the SIC (Sepang International Circuit) was built, they said it was a waste of money. Now they are saying Singapore should have had its own circuit a long time ago, which shows that they actually agree to the (SIC) project," he said.

Boon for contractors

Earlier, Kedah delegate Othman Aziz said the proposed 100-storey tower will provide opportunities to local contractors, architects and consultants to prove that they are on par with their international counterparts in building a new icon, that will become the pride of the people and nation.

To this end, he urged the government to give priority to local expertise, and also use local materials as far as possible to make the tower a showcase of everything Malaysian.

Earlier, while proposing the motion on the economy, supreme council member Awang Adek Hussin also brushed aside complaints from the opposition regarding the government's mega projects, saying they "don't understand" the importance of construction to the nation's economic growth.

The deputy Kelantan liaison chief and deputy Finance Minister pointed out that such projects

help the people by providing many job opportunities.

“They (opposition) only question who gets the contract, as if they lost out on the contract,” he said when tabling the motion to debate the economic segment of Najib’s policy speech.

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