

# 'HK of Malaysia' plan

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JOHOR BARU: Southern Johor, which is more than double the size of Singapore, is set to become a metropolis like Hong Kong island and Shenzhen in China, said the Prime Minister.

Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said the Southern Johor Economic Region (SJER) was the largest development corridor earmarked under the 9th Malaysia Plan compared to other corridors in the peninsula, Sabah and Sarawak.

"There is a lot of potential here as land is not too expensive like, in other places and there, is adequate workforce. Proper implementation of these projects will attract more investors and put Johor on the world map," he said on arrival at the Senai International Airport at 9.15am yesterday.

Thousands of people had gathered at the airport car park area to "welcome Abdullah who was on a one-day trip here to explain the state's development projects under the 9MP to the Johor Sultan and state leaders.

"We may not necessarily use the same methods of development' (as in Hong Kong or Shgnzhen) as we will mould it our way," Abdullah said, adding

that the 9MP had taken into consideration development projects already under way such as Nusajaya and Danga Bay.

Abdullah said Khazanah Nasional Berhad would be the catalyst for the development. Later at a press conference, he added that the total investment for the SJER was RM15 billion, including foreign investments.

Development of the various corridors in the country, he added, was important to steer the country towards achieving Vision 2020. The projects would bring development to other parts of the country and not be only concentrated in the Hang Valley.

The Northern Corridor, which comprises Seberang Prai, Perak and Kedah, would be developed by Permodalan Nasional Bhd (PNB) and Sime Darby, while the Eastern Corridor covering Kelantan, northern Terengganu and western Pahang would involve Petronas.

Abdullah, who met the Johor Sultan at Istana Bukit Serene at noon here, later told newsmen that the Sultan had given his approval for the projects to proceed.

He also announced that both he and Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman would be joint chairmen of a committee set up to oversee the projects.

