

Global standing

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IDR must be competitive to draw investors, says Pak Lah

By **NELSON BENJAMIN, ZAZALI MUSA** and **MEERA VIJAYAN**
newsdesk@thestar.com.my

JOHOR BARU: The Iskandar Development Region (IDR), which is set to become a new global growth centre, must be

prepared to be globally competitive to draw investors and businessmen.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said the IDR has to survive on its own ability and high standards of performance based on efficiency,

> TURN TO PAGE 4

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PM: Make use of our low cost, ample space

The Star - 24/2/2007

> FROM PAGE 1

integrity and good governance.

"There is no way to expect sympathy from anybody.

"They will have to work hard to compete with everybody as competition is a challenge we must face," he said, referring to the other global growth areas coming up around the world.

Abdullah said that networking with other global growth centres would also benefit IDR while services and work offered must also be of high quality.

"We must take advantage of our low cost and the ample space that we have," he told reporters after the launch of the inaugural Iskandar Regional Development Authority (IRDA) meeting at the Pulau Springs Resort here yesterday.

"We must attract investment from everywhere including the United States, Europe and the Middle East," he said, adding that the country was also prepared to employ international professionals with the necessary skills.

The Prime Minister also witnessed the MoU signing ceremony for the building of a hotel and a resort in the development region.

As to how he would measure the success of IDR, Abdullah said: "The presence of global players and the presence of good companies including foreign managers and professionals will be a good indicator."

Initial projections showed that IDR is expected to attract a total of US\$105bil (RM370bil) in 20 years. In

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the short term, it is supposed to attract some RM50bil in investments within five years.

IRDA is the statutory body responsible for determining the direction, policies and strategies in relation to development within the IDR.

Jointly headed by co-chairmen Abdullah and Johor Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman, the IRDA consists of five other members.

It will also have a council of five eminent persons to advise it on various matters regarding future development.

The advisory council will include five of the state's most prominent figures - Tan Sri Robert Kuok Hock Nien, Datuk Seri Andrew Sheng, Tun Musa Hitam, Tan Sri Samsudin Osman and Tan Sri Kishu Tirathrai.

On the appointment of the five, Abdullah said that he was happy to get their frank views and did not impose any restrictions or barriers to what they could bring up.

"All of them agree that there is a lot of potential for this project," he said.

NUSAJAYA DEVELOPMENT



Nusajaya is the largest private sector development in South East Asia, and it is the key flagship economic zone of the Iskandar Development Region (IDR) in South Johor. Projects slated for development include:

- EduCity - 247.2ha with two stand-alone universities and one multi-university;
- International Destination Resort - 962.7ha with two theme parks, water park, hotels, events facilities, resort real

estate, golf and spa resorts, retail and entertainment, ecotourism and marina;

- JSNAC (Johor State New Administrative Area) - 129.5ha comprising the state legislative assembly, Menteri Besar's office complex, Dataran Mahkota, state government office complexes and staff quarters, mosque and federal administrative area;
- Medical City - 27.1h with hospital, nursing college and commercial mall;

- Puteri Harbour Waterfront Precinct - 278.4ha; water transport terminal, waterfront residential area, hotel and convention centre;

- SiLC (Southern Industrial and Logistic Clusters) - 529ha; "clean" industrial clusters comprising nano and biotechnology, nutrition and health;

- Nusajaya - Leisure and Lifestyle - hill, river, eco and agro parks, retail and shopping mall.