

# 'National integrity not compromised'

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COOPERATION between Malaysia and Singapore in the Iskandar Development Region (IDR) does not mean that Malaysia has compromised its interest, Foreign Ministry parliamentary secretary Ahmad Shabery Cheek said in the Dewan Negara.

"I think in the context of Iskandar, the issue of compromising does not arise," he said in reply to Datuk Musa Sheikh Fadzir.

"We want to develop Iskandar as Shenzhen (special economic zone) in China.

"It (China) had invited foreign investors but it did not mean it had less communism now.

"In Iskandar, we also want international involvement from Middle East countries. Singapore is one of the biggest potential investors."

Musa had asked "until when Malaysia has to compromise with Singapore as our country also has dignity"?

It was reported yesterday that a special ministerial committee would be set up on each side by Malaysia and Singapore to oversee joint cooperation in the IDR.

The decision followed a meeting between Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah

Ahmad Badawi and his Singapore counterpart, Lee Hsien Loong, in Langkawi on Tuesday.

Answering another supplementary question from

## At the Dewan Negara

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Dr Mohd Puad Zarkashi, who wanted to know the reasons for setting up the committee, Ahmad Shabery said Malaysia wants to cooperate with all quarters.

"Having the ministerial committee is to have continuous cooperation and discussions (with Singapore)," he said.

"Iskandar was set up to attract foreign investors. Singapore has a large number of investors here so we should not stop their involvement."

He said the unnecessary arguments on the IDR would not benefit either country.

To another supplementary question by Datuk Azian Osman, Ahmad Shabery said the meeting between Abdullah and Lee showed that both countries noted the importance to foster bilateral relations and that there is potential wealth in the IDR.