

THE STAR

DATE: 29/03/2008

PM to meet Lim on state-federal ties

The star - 29/3/2008

Guan Eng receives quick reply to request

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PENANG: Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi has agreed to meet Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng to discuss state-federal relations.

Lim said yesterday his request for a courtesy call on Abdullah, had been fixed for 10am next Thursday in Putrajaya.

Lim, who was happy that his request for a meeting had been granted so quickly, said he would also request that the Federal Government proceed with infrastructure projects proposed for Penang.

"We would like the relationship between the state and federal governments to be maintained although there has been a change in the state government.

"We consider him (Abdullah) as the Prime Minister for all Malaysians including Penangites," Lim told a press conference at his office in Komtar.

Lim, who is also DAP secretary-general, showed the press copies of his let-

ter to Abdullah dated March 25 and the reply from the Prime Minister's chief private secretary dated March 26.

He said he would appeal to Abdullah to restore some funding under the Ninth Malaysian Plan (9MP) which was reduced by more than 50% last year for certain projects in the state, including that for industrial infrastructure.

On infrastructure projects announced under the Northern Corridor Economic Region (NCER), Lim said the state government had received courtesy calls from government-linked companies requesting that the projects be carried on.

He also said he would invite the Prime Minister to make an official visit to Penang.

On the second Penang bridge, Lim said he hoped Petronas would finance the construction of the link as a gift to Penang.

He said it would cost RM3.5bil to build the bridge which was a small amount compared to the over RM80bil profit made annually by the national

oil company.

He disputed a statement made by Petronas corporate planning and development division vice-president Datuk Nasarudin Md Idris that the oil company does not fund public infrastructure projects, saying that Petronas had financed numerous building and bridge projects in the country through various subsidiaries and investments.

Lim said Petronas owned 51% share in KLCC Property Holdings Bhd which engages in rental of investment properties and hotel operation with its property portfolio including the Petronas Twin Towers and a five-star hotel.

"Petronas was also the key funder of the entire Putrajaya development comprising large scale buildings, bridges and other infrastructure," he added.

Nasarudin was quoted by the press on Thursday as saying that Petronas only financed infrastructure projects related to the oil and gas industry such as the petrochemical complex in Kerteh.