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Development important, but not at expense of environment - *Azizan*

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Sultan Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah at the opening of the Al-Ehsan Temoyong mosque in Langkawi



Kedah Menteri Besar, Dato Seri Azizan Abdul Razak (left) greeting former premier Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad (right) at the ground breaking ceremony

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LANGKAWI - "We are different, but we share a common interest" was a statement made by Kedah Menteri Besar Dato Seri Azizan Abdul Razak, and this saw former premier Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, nodding in agreement.

"We are both aware of the importance of development projects that does not pollute and damage the environment," said Azizan at the ground breaking ceremony of a new 135 meter tower to be built on the resort island recently.

Also present was Blackrock Construction Sdn Bhd chief executive officer Dato' Abu Hassan Mohamed, the company undertaking the project.

The state government has always been supportive of any development project that could be enjoyed by the locals in addition to bringing in lucrative income to the people, said Azizan.

According to him, Langkawi has also become a major tourist

destination after Batu Feringghi in Pulau Pinang and Port Dickson in Negeri Sembilan failed to pull in crowds, he continued.

"The uniqueness of Langkawi would be maintained, by placing special significance on the aspect of tourism development and the environment," said Azizan.

Azizan said that there would also be more budget hotels constructed in Kuah town to cater to the domestic tourists who are more likely to be interested in shopping.

"This landmark tower will be the newest tourist attraction to the island and has the potential to lengthen tourists' stay here," he added.

Dr Mahathir said the idea of a tower for Langkawi was first mooted more than 20 years ago.

The project has gone ahead after securing an injection of funds from the federal government and receiving the support of the state government, he said.

"Even though there has been massive development in Langkawi, the environmental aspect has not

been neglected, in fact one would be able to see the Lake of the Pregnant Maiden (Tasik Dayang Bunting) from this tall tower," said Mahathir.

"I have been given the honour of naming the tower, but have not come up with anything suitable," he said.

Abu Hassan said that work to reclaim 11.2ha at Kuah Beach will begin next month.

Construction will begin in March, and the tower is expected to be completed within 24 months, he said.

Good governance

In a related development, the Sultan of Kedah, Sultan Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah has praised the Kedah Menteri Besar for managing the state well and implementing improvements to ensure a better living for the people.

"My government has given its full cooperation to all parties involved in ensuring the success of development projects for the sake of

the people," he said.

The Sultan said this in his speech at the investiture in conjunction with his 83rd birthday anniversary at the Istana Anak Bukit recently.

This has given the confidence to investors and the business community to do business here, for example in the manufacturing sector, said the Sultan.

In addition, Langkawi Permata Kedah has been the choice of investors to develop tourism products of international standard.

"My government has given extra focus in expediting and assisting investors to ensure the success of their projects.

"It is my hope that initiatives like these would help speed approvals and quicken all aspects of the implementation of development projects which would benefit the rakyat of this state," he said.

In his speech he said bureaucracy which has been commonly faulted in delays in completing projects must also be overcome quickly.

"I am confident political

stability and the efficient government machinery would bring in more investors, choosing this state because of its good investment location," he added.

The Sultan praised the state government for giving assistance in the form of cost of living allowance, and building affordable housing for more than 6,000 low income families.

His Royal Highness also took the opportunity to remind the rakyat to be on guard and oppose any attempt by certain people to involve him in any issue.

"Such an occurrence has happened in other places and it would cause the rakyat to be divided as sometimes political mongering does not take into account public safety and could cause chaos.

"I'm confident that the strong solidarity among the people of various races will become a bastion in preserving peace and the efforts of my government to continue to strengthen solidarity should be fully supported," he said. - ES