

| | |
|-----------|-------------------|
| Newspaper | NEW STRAITS TIMES |
| Date | 17 APRIL 2017 |

MELAKA GATEWAY PROJECT

IDRIS: DR M'S CRITICISM GOES AGAINST HIS GOALS

NST
-17/4/2017

His allegations not consistent with Look East policy, Vision 2020

KELLY KOH
MALACCA
kelly.koh@nst.com.my

FORMER prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's criticism of the Melaka Gateway mega project goes against his very own goals in Vision 2020.

Chief Minister Datuk Seri Idris Haron described Dr Mahathir as being "out of his mind" for condemning the mega project, when the latter was the longest serving prime minister responsible for introducing the Look East policy and Vision 2020.

"It (Melaka Gateway) is a sheer economic strategy after careful consideration by all parties. It is just incomprehensible why Tun M begged to differ in these facts, which was known to him while he was in office many years ago.

"As a matter of fact, this mega project is going along with the

Vision 2020 concept created by Tun M. We wonder why is he going against his own creation?

"I understand that this mega project will face massive criticism, but not from someone who was responsible for popularising the Look East policy and Vision 2020 for our country to be recognised as a developed nation," Idris told the *New Straits Times* yesterday.

Dr Mahathir had hit out at the RM4.3 billion Melaka Gateway port project as yet another sign that the Federal Government was "ceding sovereignty to China for short-term political gains".

"We have adequate facilities in this country. We have enough ports and the necessary infrastructure to attract tourists. This (Melaka Gateway) is unnecessary," the 91-year-old was quoted as saying in the *South China Morning Post* last month.

Earlier this year, Dr Mahathir repeated his criticism of Chinese investments in Johor's Forest City, insisting that foreign land

ownership would undermine national sovereignty.

Idris, who returns from a nine-day working visit to China today, said the mega project would undoubtedly magnify Malacca's economic growth, especially when Chinese trade with Asean countries would be reaching US\$1 trillion (RM4.4 trillion) in the next five years.

"We are seeing opportunities for Malacca port to be an

emerging gateway to Asean, with reference to our geographical advantage along China's One Belt, One Road initiative.

"As Singapore and other nearby ports could be facing congestion, we should not lose out on such an opportunity. Tun M might have overlooked this fact."

The chief minister said he emulated ideas from other countries in Malacca's development plan.

"We have studied the ideas in countries like Scandinavia, Japan and, of course, China, with ports beyond our expectation."

He said Malacca is a small state with limited resources, and in order to remain competitive, the state government must be creative and resilient.

"Speaking about quality, we must have a benchmark.

"Our port has to stand on a par, if not better, with other modern ports, which will be a port of choice among others. And our best benchmarks are with the Chinese at the moment.

"Malacca used to be the best entreport in the 14th century. I strongly believe with this project (Melaka Gateway), the glory of Malacca's port shall return."

Idris had established ties with China, including Guangdong province through the Malacca-Guangdong Industrial Park and the Xinyi glass factory at Lipat Kajang, Jasin.

He also facilitated 21 direct flights by China Southern Airlines to Malacca since September.



Datuk Seri Idris Haron



Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad