

'PRESERVE PENANG HILL'S HERITAGE'

Cable car project must take into account cultural aspects, says PM

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THE development of the cable car project on Penang Hill must take into account the importance of protecting the area's unique environmental and cultural heritage, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

In his speech at the groundbreaking for the project, Anwar said he was reminded of American author Mark Twain's observation about Washington DC.

He said Twain observed that "development must take into account cultural aspects".

"We should not be culturally barren because a beautiful city is not just about its concrete jungle, it must also be culturally vibrant and environmentally friendly."

Present were Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow and Hartasuma Sdn Bhd Group executive director Tan Sri Ravindran Menon.

Anwar said he hoped project developer Hartasuma would ensure that Penang Hill's environmental and cultural heritage were protected.

"Penang Hill is rich with history, not only for Penang and Malaysia, but for this region.

"Visitors from abroad, such as Thailand, come here for educational purposes."

He said even though a cable car would be built, people should still be able to hike up the hill.

"There must be space to encourage the young to hike like I used to during my younger days."

The RM250 million Penang Hill cable car project will boost connectivity and accessibility to one of Malaysia's most iconic and historic tourist destinations. Work is set to complete in 2026.

Penang Hill renowned for its ecology, rich history, hiking trails and panoramic views.

Last year, Penang Hill received 1.67 million visitors, close to its pre-pandemic peak of 1.9 million visitors in 2019.

The cable car will serve as a gateway to the Penang Hill Biosphere Reserve, a Unesco Biosphere Reserve.



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim says late political stalwart Datuk Seri Karpal Singh was a loyal friend until his death, PIC BY DANIAL SAAD

On a separate issue, Anwar said the government had yet to decide on the removal of the RON95 petrol subsidy.

Asked to comment on Economy Minister Rafizi Ramli's statement that Putrajaya would announce measures for RON95 similar to those for diesel, Anwar said Rafizi meant to say the focus was still on diesel.

"Rafizi said the focus is now on diesel (subsidy rationalisation) and the effectiveness of its implementation needs to be looked into. And that if anyone feels they have been affected, speak up.

"I looked at it (what Rafizi said) in that context.

"As for the rest, no decision has been made," he said at the launch of Menara Hasil Pulau Pinang here yesterday.

Rafizi, on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum's summer gathering in Dalian, China, did not say when an announcement on the matter would be made.

"We will keep our cards close to our chest in the same way we surprised everyone with diesel. So we did surprise everyone with diesel, and I think everyone is up for another surprise," he was quoted as saying by Bloomberg.

The government implemented the diesel subsidy rationalisation on June 10. Diesel prices in the peninsula rose to RM3.35 per litre. The move has come under fire from the opposition.

On another issue, Anwar said parties in the unity government would meet to discuss the candidate for the Nenggiri state seat by-election.

"Let them discuss first," he said briefly when asked who would

contest the state seat.

The Election Commission (EC) fixed Aug 17 for the by-election, with nomination of candidates on Aug 3 and early voting on Aug 13.

The by-election was called after the Kelantan state assembly declared the seat vacant on June 19.

This came after former assemblyman Mohd Azizi Abu Naim was stripped of his Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia membership.

Yesterday, Anwar attended the "Reminiscing About Karpal" event here to commemorate late political stalwart Datuk Seri Karpal Singh with his wife, Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail.

In a Facebook post, Anwar said Karpal, who died in a car crash in 2014, was a champion of the people.

"Azizah and I are deeply moved because our family has a long history with Karpal.

"Recalling personal experiences with him, who was also my attorney, Karpal was indeed a loyal friend until the end of his life.

"He was not an easy-to-deal-with companion as he could be very direct in some matters and firm about them."

He said Karpal was a staunch advocate of the Constitution and deeply loved his country.

"Karpal remained a steadfast friend who stood by me during challenging times and was committed to the struggle until his last breath.

"My heartfelt appreciation to his family, Gurmit, Jagdeep, Gobind, Ram and Sangeet."

Page 1 pic: An artist's impression of a cable car station on Penang Hill.