

**Johor Umno calls for 'Crooked Bridge' to be revived**  
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**By Shannon Teoh**

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 11 — Johor Umno called on the federal government yesterday to revive the 'Crooked Bridge' mooted by Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad to replace the 88-year-old Causeway to Singapore.

The former prime minister has pushed hard for the Crooked Bridge from the time he was in power in the 1990s and in February pressured Johor Umno to revive the idea.

The PM has been reluctant to discuss the proposal which was received frostily by Singapore's government when first mooted. — file pic  
But Najib, who is keen to repair bilateral ties with the island republic, has been reluctant to discuss the proposal which was received frostily by Singapore's government when first mooted.

Berita Harian reported Johor Umno information chief Puad Zarkashi as saying that the project would benefit both Malaysians and Singaporeans.

"Other than reducing congestion on the Causeway, the crooked bridge will allow easy passage for patrol vessels, attract tourists and boost the economy of both countries," the deputy education minister was quoted as saying.

The Batu Pahat MP said that a memorandum was handed over to Datuk Seri Najib Razak and that Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin had also lent his support to the proposal.

The plan to tear down the Malaysian half of the Causeway and replace it with a curving bridge high enough for shipping traffic to pass beneath was ditched by Dr Mahathir's successor, Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

Dr Mahathir, who still wields significant influence over Umno despite stepping down in 2003, made his ire towards Abdullah very public and has continued to harangue Najib over the construction of the bridge.

But the prime minister had instead preferred to discuss other potential solutions such as a third bridge with Malaysia's southern neighbour. He also successfully resolved the long-standing issue of Malayan Railway land in Singapore last year.

The Iskandar Regional Development Authority (IRDA) tasked with turning south Johor into a thriving economic hub, also mooted an undersea tunnel as a third link between Malaysia and Singapore last month.

The Causeway, which is about 1.056km long, was completed in 1923 and links Johor Baru to Woodlands on the other side of the Straits of Johor. Between 80,000 and 100,000 vehicles use it daily.

The proposal to build a bridge to replace the 87-year-old Causeway was justified by Dr Mahathir as a means to ease traffic congestion between Johor Baru and Singapore and facilitate the free flow of water in the Tebrau Straits in addition to allowing ships heading to

East Asia to bypass Singapore.

But as of July last year, the Najib administration has no intention of reviving the crooked bridge project proposed by Dr Mahathir to replace the Causeway, according to Datuk Seri Nazri Aziz.

The minister in the Prime Minister's Department said the government will stick to the decision reached during Abdullah's administration.

"The crooked bridge will not be built. There have been no talks to revive the project," Nazri had told The Malaysian Insider.

Umno-linked Malaysian Resources Corporation Berhad (MRCB) is also set to impose a toll on vehicles crossing the Causeway in both directions after completing its Eastern Dispersal Link (EDL) that brings traffic from the border to the North-South Highway.

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