

**Iskandar Malaysia Has Never Sidelined Johor Folk - Muhyiddin
Bernama
25 April, 2013**

SEGAMAT, April 25 (Bernama) -- Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said today the Iskandar Malaysia development project has succeeded in bringing in RM102 billion in investments and making a big contribution, both directly and indirectly, to the people of Johor.

"The Iskandar Malaysia project has generated many economic opportunities in its development, involving many local contractors carrying out the work.

"It has also opened up thousands of job opportunities, a large proportion of which can benefit the people of Johor," the deputy prime minister told a media conference after launching the Support For Housewife (1MS4HW) programme and Azam Kerja 1Malaysia carnival here.

He said that with the development of Iskandar Malaysia, the spillover effects were also felt in many other areas which were becoming more progressive, with one acre (0.4ha) of land which was previously valued at RM30,000 to RM50,000 now fetching up to RM2 million.

"Doesn't Anwar understand or see this? I don't know, he said in dismissing claims by opposition leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim that the Iskandar Malaysia development project did not have much participation from the Johor folk nor did it benefit them much.

Yesterday, Anwar, at a ceramah in Bandar Baru Uda, Johor Baharu, claimed that Johor Menteri Besar Johor Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak had failed to ensure that many Johor folk participated in the Iskandar Malaysia development project.

Muhyiddin said the government had never stopped anyone with the capital from investing in the area together with investors from within and outside the country.

"Don't view benefits from the aspect of project or investment only, but in different forms which the Iskandar authorities may be able to answer more clearly in terms of statistics and the results of the development.

"I believe the statistics can counter Anwar's claims that Iskandar Malaysia only benefited others and not Johor folk," he said.

Asked to comment on the running of the BN machinery with 10 days to go before the polls, he said the party's campaign was running smoothly with more activities conducted to get close to the people.

The BN, which had ample experience in the matter, had its own way to approach the voters to explain issues compared with the opposition which appeared aggressive in their campaigning, he said.

Muhyiddin also reminded the BN machinery that large turn-outs at opposition ceramah did not reflect the people's support.

"I hope we don't get influenced. We are also used to turn-outs of 30,000 to 50,000 at our programmes. What's important is that we understand the voters' attitude," he said.

Present were Muhyiddin's wife, Puan Sri Noorainee Abdul Rahman, and Human Resources Minister Datuk Dr S.Subramaniam, who is contesting the Segamat parliamentary seat on a BN ticket.

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