

## **Najib Announces Seven Initiatives And Projects To Maintain Momentum Of Development In Labuan**

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LABUAN, Feb 28 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak today announced seven initiatives and projects to continue the momentum of development on the rapidly developing duty free island, for the wellbeing and prosperity of its residents.

The initiatives and projects included continuing subsidising the Labuan passenger ferry worth RM15 million a year and developing a mini Urban Transformation Centre (UTC) to provide a more efficient service to the public.

Other initiatives and projects announced by Najib, who is also the Finance Minister, were the allocation of RM1.5 million for an escalator at the Labuan Central Market Complex and RM20 million to boost the facility at the Malaysian Fisheries Development Authority (LKIM) fish landing jetty.

Najib also announced the construction of several roads on the island, of which the details would be announced later, and a significant reduction in stamp duties for the conversion of agriculture land to housing and religious projects under the Federal Territory Islamic Religious Department worth RM77.5 million.

The religious projects included the building of a new RM7 million surau for Kampung Sungai Bedaun, RM5 million to build a surau in the town centre, RM60 million to build a religious secondary school and hostel in Kampung Sungai Bedaun and RM2 million to repair the An Nur Mosque.

"I am glad to see the development of Labuan as part of the Federal Territory. In the past, we saw Labuan as a laid-back island and probably its appearance was not too enticing but today, it is clear that as a result of planning and development strategies implemented by the government, Labuan today has a new look and is becoming more modern, progressive with a rapidly developing economy.

"But our task is not over yet..we need to turn the Federal Territory of Labuan not only for domestic benefits but also portraying Labuan as an island of international stature. We must redouble our efforts," he said.

Najib said this in his speech at the opening of the Labuan Central Market Complex here, today. Also present were Federal Territory Minister Datuk Seri Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor and Labuan Member of Parliament and Labuan Corporation chairman, Datuk Rozman Isli.

According to Najib, although Labuan was now renowned as a centre for oil and gas industry, International Offshore Financial Centre, besides its potentials as a tourism destination, and accommodating part of the campus of University Malaysia Sabah as well as

a matriculation centre, continuous efforts must be made to boost its development.

As such, Najib said under the 11th Malaysia Plan, serious efforts must be done to identify other types of projects needed in Labuan to continue the development of the island in the various economic sectors.

According to Najib whatever projects and initiatives to be implemented by the government for Labuan would prioritise the interest of the people, for the wellbeing and prosperity of the people on the island.

During the ceremony, Najib also launched the setting up of the Labuan Education Foundation and announced an aid of RM2 million for the foundation to boost the level of education of the people of Labuan and develop human capital on the island.

"I can see if we want to ensure that the people benefit from the reforms and transformation on the island, we must invest in human capital development. Otherwise, the people will feel themselves isolated from the mainstream of development," he said.

According to Najib, local children would also definitely be enjoying the benefits of any form of economic activities and numerous other sectors created on the island if they were successful in their education and had high skills.

Najib also announced that he would be visiting Labuan again before the end of the year.

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