

Bagan Datuk: PM Najib Approves RM2.3 Bln for development

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SERDANG, March 18 (Bernama) -- Bagan Datuk in Perak is set for transformation with a sizeable development allocation of RM2.3 billion.

Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said the funds were approved by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak and would be channelled through various ministries and agencies for spiritual and physical development under the 10th Malaysia Plan (RMK-10) and 11th Malaysia Plan (RMK-11).

The Deputy Prime Minister who is also Bagan Datuk member of parliament, said the government wanted to ensure that the aspirations of the people would be realised under the eight clusters of the National Transformation 2050 (TN50).

"I thank the Prime Minister for it. It is real, not a dream or fantasy. It is in the RMK-10 and RMK-11," he told over 2,500 Bagan Datuk residents at a 'Majlis Aspirasi TN50 @ Bagan Datuk' at Malaysia Agro Exposition Park Serdang here today.

According to Ahmad Zahid, 500 residential units being built and scheduled for completion in January 2021 under the People's Housing Project (PPR) in Bagan Datuk and which would be sold at RM35,000 each, was one of the government's efforts to assist low income and less fortunate people to own homes.

"The construction cost for each unit is RM80,000 but the government is selling it at RM35,000. The 1Malaysia Public Housing Project has also commenced and while the construction cost of each unit is RM350,000, it will be sold to civil servants at a relatively low price of between RM146,000 and RM299,000.

"This planning is not just on paper. All the projects have already started, " he said to applause from those present.

Ahmad Zahid said Bagan Datuk, long considered a 'cowboy town', would experience a facelift through various socio-economic developments that emphasised on education. He cited Bagan Datuk Polytechnic and Bagan Datuk Mara Junior Science College which are scheduled to be completed in April 2021 and March 2020.

"We are targeting 5,000 students for the polytechnic. We currently have 200 registered students and have started courses in engineering, automotive and vehicle installation at a temporary building at Hutan Melintang. Priority would be given to Bagan Datuk children to pursue their studies locally, " he promised.

The deputy prime minister said the Tahfiz Darul Ridzuan Secondary School in Bagan Datuk once completed, would be one of six Tahfiz secondary schools under the initiative of the Perak state government and hopefully produce about 30,000 professional huffaz equipped with multidisciplines.

During the two-hour TN50 casual meeting with Bagan Datuk residents, Ahmad Zahid said a 1.5km-long bridge that was being built and scheduled to be completed in March 2020, would shorten travel time between Bagan Datuk and nearby areas such as Manjung, Sitiawan and Pasir Salak.

"Upon completion of the Coastal Highway project, which is currently under construction and the bridge, Bagan Datuk town will experience change in its socioeconomic position and communication network system. I expect the journey from Bagan Datuk to Kuala Lumpur to take only about 90 minutes.

"These are all government plans and transformations towards prosperity and improvement of the quality of life of all Malaysians regardless of ethnicity, religion and race, " he said.

Ahmad Zahid said Bagan Datuk would also be transformed into an employment hub with the establishment of an automotive and vehicle installation plant by Tan Chong Motors, a tuna processing factory and Perak Heavy Industry Park, that would generate 26,000 new jobs by 2020.

In regard to security, he said the Bagan Datuk District Police Headquarters scheduled to be completed in November 2021 could accommodate at least 280 police officers and personnel.

Ahmad Zahid said a prison for detainees under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA) was being constructed and expected to be completed in November 2021.

"This prison will serve as a rehabilitation camp, modified for the deradicalisation process which is more towards education rather than punitive.

"This prison is not built because of the general election or politics. When I was then Minister of Defence, the land was bought for reinforcement of our country's defence. In the meantime, this special prison is being operated at Kamunting Detention Camp," he said.

Ahmad Zahid also expressed his intention to open a Universiti Teknologi Mara branch campus and build a stadium at Bagan Datuk. He also approved an initial allocation of RM250,000 for the quest for talented athletes from Bagan Datuk to represent the country in the Olympics.

Meanwhile, the deputy prime minister told a press conference that a private entity had proposed to build a US\$20 billion bridge from Bagan Datuk to Sumatera, which had been approved in principle in the aspect of physical planning.

"However, it needs Environmental Impact Assessment Report approval and because it involves cooperation between ASEAN member states, the implementation of the bridge

requires certain procedures to be followed and diplomatic relations and protocols to be maintained.

"We want investors to come in with the consent of the Perak government and full approval of the Malaysian government, the Indonesian government and the governors of certain provinces in Sumatera. As this is a private initiative, I leave it to them to seek approval from the relevant parties," he said.

On concerns expressed by one of the participants at the TN50 dialogue over corruption and abuse of power among civil servants, Ahmad Zahid said the government had always followed standard operating procedures set by the Public Service Department and the Corruption-Free Pledge by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission.

"In fact we also take a number of internal steps in accordance with the existing general order, and I urge enforcement agencies to act immediately to prevent and eliminate negative perceptions as quickly as possible," he said.

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