

Plans to boost Johor's growth

Four initiatives announced to turn state into economic power

By NELSON BENJAMIN
and MOHD FARHAAN SHAH
newsdesk@thestar.com.my

ISKANDAR PUTERI: The Federal Government has announced four new initiatives to boost Johor's growth and propel the state into a new economic powerhouse.

In announcing this, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said RM2.56bil will be allocated for the implementation of the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system in the next four years.

The other initiatives are a Johor Skills Development masterplan to help train a skilled workforce, a 'Johor Sustainability Policy' to balance development and conserving the environment and the construction of more than 2,380 homes in five new public housing schemes state-wide.

"Johor is on the verge of a major transformation, especially with the many development projects and investments," he said during the launch of the Ekspo Johor Berkemajuan at Kota Iskandar here yesterday.

On the BRT project, Najib said the Federal Government would allocate RM1bil for the project while the balance of RM1.56bil would be through private-public partnership.

"BRT is a high quality bus transit system, which will provide a reliable, comfortable and cost effective service."

"This project will be similar to the



Open top: Najib and Johor Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin (third from right) looking at a Morgan three-wheeled automobile used by the Johor Sultan during the Johor Mahkota Travel 2017 last month. — Bernama

Light Transit System or Metro as it will be faster than normal bus services," he added.

The BRT, he said, was expected to be ready by 2021 and would connect at least 90% of areas in Iskandar Malaysia spanning over 51km.

Najib added that BRT would be the "backbone" of public transpor-

tation infrastructure in Iskandar for the next two decades.

On the Johor Skills Development masterplan, he said a new RM100mil technical and vocational education (TVET) training centre was being built in Kulai to train some 20,000 people annually.

He said the Johor Sustainability

Policy was to ensure a balance in the development and environment sustainability is achieved.

On housing, he said a total of five public housing projects would be created in Ulu Tiram, Masai, Permas, Bandar Tenggara and Sembrong by 2020, with the Government subsidising RM100,000 for each unit.

MB: Initiatives will ensure socio-economic progress

ISKANDAR PUTERI: The Johor government has expressed confidence over the four new initiatives introduced by the Federal Government to boost the state's socio-economic development, said Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin.

He said the state's development agenda was based on meticulous planning and preparation. It was also done in line with the Federal Government's national development

agenda to ensure Johor residents enjoyed socio-economic progress.

Khaled said the BRT is jointly developed by the Federal Government and Johor through Iskandar Regional Development Authority. The route would involve special lanes and iconic stations within Iskandar Malaysia.

"The first phase is scheduled to start operations by 2021 and this project will connect 90% of routes in Iskandar Malaysia that covers

51km, 39 stations and three hubs," he said in his speech during the Ekspo Johor Berkemajuan Kota Iskandar here yesterday.

It was launched by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

Khaled said the BRT operation would ply routes passing 16 shopping malls, 27 schools and higher learning institutes as well as five hospitals and medical centres.

On housing, he said four more projects would be carried out in

Johor involving the construction of 1,830 units at a cost of RM360mil.

He added that Johor was the third highest state to receive People's Housing Projects (PPR), with 8,278 units already completed by Sept 30 costing RM575mil.

Khaled said the state has also outlined its commitment to preserving the environment.

"The state government always believes that development and progress should not forsake nature."

IGP: More arrests expected over alleged rape of diver

KOTA KINABALU: More arrests are expected in the case involving the alleged rape of a national diver at the National Aquatics Centre in Bukit Jali.

Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Mohd Fuzi Harun said a total of 18 people had been questioned so far.

Investigators have also obtained CCTV recordings while assistance has been sought from forensic, pathology and chemical specialists in their probe.

"Their input is necessary before we submit a report to the Attorney-General's Chambers," he said here yesterday.

He said after one person had been detained in connection with the case, no athlete has stepped forward with similar allegations.

Police arrested a 35-year-old coach on Monday, a day after the national diver reported the incident, which allegedly took place on Sept 26.

"We consider him as the main suspect but it depends on the development of our investigation."

"If there is a need, we will make more arrests."

"We will conduct a detailed investigation and hope the investigation papers can be completed as soon as possible," he said after attending an investiture ceremony at the Istana Negeri here.

Fuzi was among seven people who were conferred the Seri Panglima Darjah Kinabalu (SPDK) award, which carries the title "Datuk Seri Panglima".

The ceremony was in conjunction with Sabah Yang di-Pertua Negeri Tun Junar Mahiruddin's 64th birthday celebrations.

In Kuala Lumpur, City CID chief SAC Rusdi Md Isa said the coach's remand period had been extended by five days until Wednesday.

It was my fault for going home late, says chained boy

By ONG HAN SEAN
hansan@thestar.com.my

KUANTAN: The 10-year-old boy, who was found chained by his neck to a gas tank, said it was his fault for coming home late from a cybercafe.

According to state Women and Family Development, Communication and Multimedia Committee chairman Datuk Shahaniza Shamsuddin, the boy said his stepfather had never punished him that way before.

"From my conversation with him, he said his stepfather had disciplined him before but never gone this far. He admitted that he came home at 1am that day and his parents were mad at him."

"Nevertheless, our social workers will try to get the full picture of what really happened," Shahaniza said after visiting the boy at the children's ward of Hospital Tengku Ampuan Afzan here yesterday.

Police had to break down the door of the house in Indera Mahkota here to rescue the boy after being alerted by the public on Thursday.



Unchained: Shahaniza speaking to the boy while he recuperates at the Tengku Ampuan Afzan Hospital in Kuantan. — Bernama

The 32-year-old stepfather, who is a soldier at Kem Batu 10, Jalan Gambang here, and his wife have been remanded for investigations.

According to Shahaniza, doctors

said the boy was in good health and did not show any signs of trauma.

"He will be placed in the hospital until the case is resolved because this is currently the safest

place for him.

"The Welfare Department and the hospital will monitor his condition and send counsellors if necessary."

"We will wait for the investigations to be completed and if needed, we will get a court order to put the boy in protective custody."

"Further action will depend on police and the Welfare Department's investigations," she said.

Shahaniza said the boy also wanted to see his biological father, who is working in Melaka.

"We are in the midst of contacting the boy's biological father. The boy told me he last saw his father during Hari Raya last year."

"He misses his father so I urge his father to please visit him," she said.

In Jitra, Deputy Defence Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Johari Baharum said the ministry would leave it to the Armed Forces chief to take action against the soldier should he be convicted.

He said the ministry was still waiting for a full report from the police.

"The case is seen as physical abuse. It has nothing to do with the Defence Ministry."

"Anyhow, I cannot give my comments but just have to wait until the police investigation is over," he told reporters at a JKKK community event in Taman Bersatu yesterday.

On the case of the elderly man found locked in his faeces-strewn home, Shahaniza said Tang Ngat, 77, was recovering well at the hospital.

"The Welfare Department will meet with Tang's children and try to find a solution for his situation."

"We are proposing that he be placed under the care of the department's old folks institution but we cannot force him," she said, adding that Tang was a recipient of welfare aid since 2013.

Tang, who is partially paralysed from stroke, was taken to the hospital after his neighbour notified Teruntum assemblyman Sim Chon Siang of his plight.

It was later revealed that Tang's children had trouble caring for him due to his unusual behaviour.