



**19 February 2009 (Thursday)**

## **RM9 billion pour into Halal Hub in Sarawak**

By Firdaus Abdullahfirdy@nst.com.my

**TANJUNG MANIS: Sarawak's Halal Hub here charted a remarkable start with the signing of more than RM9 billion worth of investment agreements on the first day of its official existence.**

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, who launched the 16,000ha Halal Hub, the largest in the country, witnessed the signing of the investment agreements by local and foreign investors. The investments in the hub, which falls under the Sarawak Corridor of Renewable Energy or Score, were for a variety of livestock and food production related industries, a technical college and a 3-star hotel in this once quiet fishing village. "The launching of the Halal Hub here today is testimony of the government's commitment towards the well-being of the people. "This is not an exclusive project but rather an inclusive project that will benefit the locals," Abdullah said at the launch yesterday. "The locals must be trained to play a part in the specialised industries like biotech, aquaculture and food production. We don't want the locals to be mere spectators."

The prime minister also urged future industries in the area to give priority to local workers. He urged locals here and the surrounding areas to grab the opportunities and not wait for the government to persuade them. "All elected representatives must also ensure that the people are aware of the opportunities presented by the creation of the Halal Hub here. This is the biggest and the most important growth area in the country." Abdullah also called on the government and private bodies to set up skills training institutes in areas where industries were expected. "We must prepare our people before the industries start operation, not after." Abdullah said the Federal Government would continue to support the Sarawak government in its endeavours to attract investors. Earlier, Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud revealed that despite the current financial crunch, Score had sealed several long-term investments. "With the completion of Bakun (hydroelectric dam) and the expected commissioning of the Murum (hydroelectric dam) by 2010, we should have between 9,000 and 10,000MW of electricity for our energy intensive industries. "Tanjung Manis, with its natural inland port and with the Halal Hub, would eventually be connected to the surrounding areas like Mukah with good infrastructure. Tanjung Manis is an integral part of Score," Taib said.

The Halal Hub is being developed by Sarawak Timber Industry Development Corporation (STDIC) with close cooperation with the Halal Industry Development Corporation (HDC). Present were STDIC chairman Datuk Amar Awang Tengah Ali Hassan and HDC chairman Tan Sri Syed Jalaluddin Syed Salim.

**20 February 2009 (Friday)**

## **Why landslides continue to occur**

By : Jennifer Gomez



IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO APPROVE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE PROJECT. WE SHOULD FOLLOW THROUGH THE DEVELOPMENT PROGRESS AND KEEP TABS ON THEM.

— Dr Azimuddin Bahari  
Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment's mineral and geoscience division under-secretary



### **KUALA LUMPUR: Why are landslides still happening when several laws and guidelines on hillslope development have been put in place?**

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment's mineral and geoscience division under-secretary, Dr Azimuddin Bahari, put it down to a lack of coordination among the various agencies and the lack of enforcement. He was speaking at a seminar on Effective Management of Hillslopes organised by the National Institute of Public Administration (Intan).

"We have every kind of act in place to govern the safety of physical development, including those on hillslopes -- from the National Land Code, to the Land Conservation Act and Geological Survey Act, and also a whole list of guidelines, but these tragedies still happen, although we have records of the first landslide dating back to 1919 in Ipoh." He observed that there had been some 500 landslides since then. Addressing the participants from various government agencies and local authorities involved in approving hillslope development and related matters, Azimuddin asked them to ponder over the matter.

He said they should ask themselves if they had made the right decisions when approving the projects. He added that plan-approving officers and enforcement officials should know how to read the various laws and apply them. "For instance, we should look at how we can apply the law to someone who has idle land and does not maintain it, because this can cause a landslide."

Azimuddin added that certain acts did not have enough bite to bring perpetrators to book. "And we must ask ourselves if it is solely up to the local authority to enforce the law. As it is, they don't have the manpower and enforcement capabilities."

He also called on the officers to follow up on projects approved. "It is not enough to approve at the beginning of the project. We should follow through the development progress and keep tabs on them." He suggested that given the rise in the number of landslide tragedies, the Public Works Department could spearhead efforts to coordinate agencies involved in hillslope development.

**21 February 2009 (Saturday)**

## **Cabinet approves RM70m to repair collapsed slope**

By : Joseph Sipalan



**A file picture showing an aerial view of the Bukit Antarabangsa landslide that claimed five lives and flattened 14 bungalows on Dec 6 last year. Works Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Zin Mohamed yesterday announced a RM70 million budget to repair and reinforce the collapsed slope.**

**KUALA LUMPUR: The government will spend RM70 million to repair and reinforce the collapsed slope in Bukit Antarabangsa.**

Works Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Zin Mohamed said the allocation was approved by the cabinet yesterday and remedial work was expected to start as early as next week, pending the appointment of contractors. Zin said repair work would initially focus on dangerous sections near Taman Bukit Mewah, Taman Bukit Jaya and Jalan Wangsa 9 where 44 houses are still deemed hazardous for habitation.

"Our target is to do the repairs within six months so that all the residents can move back to their homes," he said when announcing the findings of an in-depth study into the Dec 6, 2008 landslide by the Public Works Department's Slope Engineering Division and other government departments.

Zin said the rest of the 212 homeowners who were issued evacuation notices on Dec 19 could now return to their homes. He noted, however, that it would take about two years before repair and reinforcement work, especially at ground zero, could be fully completed. Among the repair and reinforcement work expected to be carried out include hand-dug caissons, soil nailing, micropiling, tie back and horizontal drainage.

Zin said the objective of the remedial work was to stabilise the area to ensure the safety of residents and also to allow owners of the 14 houses destroyed to rebuild their homes. He said based on aerial photographs of the area, taken from 1968 up till the day of the landslide that killed five people, the tragedy was due to human error. "The slope is not a natural slope, so obviously it was not a natural failure. This was a man-made slope created at about the time Taman Bukit Mewah was developed between 1975 and 1985."

Zin said his ministry was still identifying those responsible for slope maintenance in Bukit Antarabangsa, after which they would claim for full reimbursement. He said the responsibility generally lies with the developer or landowner, the local authority and the state government.

"My ministry will ascertain who is responsible, including the landowner and submitting person who carried out projects that had contributed to the landslide, and claim for all remedial and reinforcement work expenses."

REMEDIAL AND REINFORCEMENT WORK AT BUKIT ANTARABANGSA		HOUSES STILL IN THE DANGER ZONE
Where	Repairs	The location of the 44 houses still barred from habitation by the Public Works Department are as follows;
Jalan Wangsa 11 (left of abandoned housing)	Hand-dug caisson and tie back	<b>■ Jalan 6A, Taman Bukit Jaya:</b> • Nos 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16  <b>■ Taman Bukit Mewah:</b> • Nos 6-10, 19, 20, 21 along Jalan Bukit Antarabangsa • Nos 1 and 40 along Jalan Bukit Mewah 2 • Nos 5-7 along Jalan Bukit Mewah 1  <b>■ Jalan Wangsa 9:</b> • The Entire Block from Nos: 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 31, 33, 35, 37, 39, 41, 43, 45, 47
Jalan Wangsa 9	Soil nailing, micropiling and tie back	
Jalan Wangsa 11 (at abandoned housing)	Hand-dug caisson and tie back	
Taman Bukit Mewah and Jalan Bukit Antarabangsa	Restoration of road and drainage system	
Ground Zero	Hand-dug caisson, tie back and earthworks	
Taman Bukit Jaya	Horizontal drain	
Kyoto Gardens Condominium	Soil nailing and wire mesh	

**23 February 2009 (Monday)**

## Najib shuts the door on Labu LCCT

**DEPUTY Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak yesterday quashed any possibility of reviving the proposed low-cost carrier terminal (LCCT) in Labu, Negri Sembilan.**

"We have decided. The project in Labu cannot continue because Sime Darby will not cover the infrastructure cost. They will only sell the land to the party developing the LCCT," he told the Malaysian media here. Najib, who is also finance minister, said the infrastructure cost related to the proposed LCCT in Labu would amount to RM800 million. "I received confirmation from Sime Darby. If they are not contributing (towards the infrastructure cost), then there is no basis for the project to be considered."

Najib said the new LCCT would be built at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA) in Sepang. He said AirAsia's requirements for the new LCCT, such as parking charges, were being negotiated. It was reported last week that the proposal for the Labu LCCT was still under discussion.

A Bernama report quoted Transport Minister Datuk Seri Ong Tee Keat as saying in a written reply in Parliament that a final decision had not been made on whether to proceed with or scrap the proposal to build the terminal. The report said a comprehensive study was being done to ensure that the project was feasible and would benefit the people. Ong also reportedly said AirAsia Bhd would have to bear the cost of building the new LCCT as well as take on the connectivity costs, such as constructing roads and rail tracks and other infrastructure.

## **23 February 2009 (Monday)**

### **Probe into Selangor subsidiary's accounts**

**SHAH ALAM:** Two top officials of state subsidiary Permodalan Negeri Selangor Bhd have been asked to go on leave immediately over allegations of accounting irregularities.

They are PNSB chief executive officer Datin Khairiyah Abu Hassan and finance manager Nora Azmin Radzuan. Menteri Besar Tan Sri Abdul Khalid Ibrahim said he had uncovered several offences in record-keeping and other weaknesses in PNSB. He said that among the accounts probed were those that had been given to the Inland Revenue Board. Also being investigated is the purchase and sale of properties in Mecca, Saudi Arabia.

Khalid said the two women had been given 30 days of paid leave so that auditing and updating of accounts could take place. It is learned that Khalid personally handed the letters to them yesterday. Nora is also Selangor Puteri Umno chief. It is also learned that investigations have revealed that some of the accounts submitted to the IRB did not include perks enjoyed by some of the previous top officials. Another issue being investigated is a RM159,250 Patek Philippe watch given as a souvenir to former PNSB chairman and Selangor menteri besar Datuk Seri Dr Mohd Khir Toyo. It is understood that the watch was presented to Dr Khir before the March 8 general election. He has since returned it. However, there are questions over the accounts. On the properties in Mecca, PNSB is believed to have bought apartments but later sold them without approval. The audits are expected to reveal to whom they were sold.

## **24 February 2009 (Tuesday)**

### **ECER infrastructure projects on track**

**KUANTAN:** The economic slowdown is not expected to derail the East Coast Economic Region (ECER) initiative in Pahang as the government has allocated more than RM1 billion to implement infrastructure projects to support the more than RM5.3 billion worth of investments secured.

Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Adnan Yaakob said this yesterday after the inaugural meeting of the state ECER Implementation and Coordination Committee (ICC). He said 24 of the 45 ECER projects for Pahang got under way last year. Eighteen more will start this year and three will start next year. The ICC has agreed on a trust fund of RM200 million to help develop Malay reserve land.

## **25 February 2009 (Wednesday)**

### **Rules flouted in Mecca deals**

**KLANG:** The alleged irregularities in Permodalan Negeri Selangor Berhad's (PNSB) record keeping were over the number of properties bought in Mecca.

According to a statement from the menteri besar's office, one of Menteri Besar Incorporated's (MBI) concerns were the delay in finalising the 2007 financial accounts of PNSB. It said records showed that the money had been transferred in 2007 to Saudi Arabia for the purchase of properties that exceeded the number approved. It added that someone had allegedly tried to buy back some of the units at the same price that PNSB had paid for them but that no official receipt had been issued to acknowledge the transaction.

The statement also pointed out that between the date of the acquisition and disposal of units, there was no board of directors meeting or board of directors circular resolution for the transaction. PNSB chief executive officer Datin Khairiyah Abu Hassan and finance manager Nora Azmin Radzuan, who is also Selangor Puteri Umno chief, have been asked to go on 30 days leave over the matter.

## **26 February 2009 (Thursday)**

### **Copter centre here by 2011**

By : Alang Bendahara



**The Eurocopter helicopter simulator and training centre in Malaysia is said to be based on the HELISIM Training Academy in Marignane, France.**

**KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia is set to be the only country in Southeast Asia and Australasia to host Eurocopter's helicopter simulator for the EC225 Super Puma and EC725 Cougar models.**

The coveted simulator centre, the fifth in the world, will provide training for pilots of both the civilian and military versions of the helicopters in Asia, Australia and New Zealand. It is learnt that Malaysia was chosen over Singapore for the advanced training facility. Currently, simulation training for the EC225 and EC725 is offered at Eurocopter's HELISIM Training Academy in Marignane, France. There are also similar centres being set up in Aberdeen (the United Kingdom), Dallas (the United States) and Brazil. The centre in Malaysia will be ready in 2011.

Eurocopter chief executive officer Lutz Bertling said the centre in Malaysia would ensure that the company could offer full flight simulators, flight training devices and training aids all over the world. Bertling said this in a statement issued on Sunday at the Heli-Expo 2009 in Anaheim, the United States.

The new Eurocopter helicopter simulator and training centre in Malaysia is said to be based on the company's HELISIM Training Academy in Marignane. During a visit by the New Straits Times in May last year, the expansive French facility was fully booked by helicopter pilots coming from all over the world, including Malaysia. Malaysian pilots will benefit most from the local centre as pilots have to stay for weeks for the simulator training. Eurocopter Malaysia holds the largest portion of the civilian helicopter market in Malaysia with a 50 per cent share. It operates from Subang, Miri and Kerteh. Incorporated in August 2002, Eurocopter Malaysia is the only helicopter manufacturer with its own Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) service centre in the country