



**Friday March 6, 2009**

### **RM10bil expected in second stimulus package**

KUALA LUMPUR: The second stimulus package to help the country weather the global economic meltdown will be at least RM10bil. The total amount however is expected to be more as additional funds could be announced when Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak unveils the package in Parliament on Tuesday.



**"There will be measures on tax reliefs and also direct investment by private companies" - DATUK KONG CHO HA**

The RM10bil was provided for through the Supplementary Supply (2009) Bill which was tabled at the Dewan Rakyat by Deputy Finance Minister Datuk Kong Cho Ha yesterday. Speaking to reporters at the Parliament lobby later, he said the total amount for the package might be bigger when Najib announced it. "This is because there will be measures on tax reliefs and also direct investment by private companies," he said.

Of the RM10bil tabled yesterday, Kong said RM5bil would be for development funds and RM5bil for operation funds. The stimulus package is the second after the Government provided a RM7bil package last November. Further details on how the RM10bil was going to be spent was not available despite copies of the Bill being distributed to MPs yesterday. When reporters began asking for the details from the MPs, Dewan Rakyat Deputy Speaker Datuk Ronald Kiandee asked them not to reveal anything until after Najib presented it in the House. "Until the Bill is presented on Tuesday, I wish to inform you that it is not appropriate to reveal the information contained in the Bill to other parties," he told the MPs in the House.

Apart from the Bill, MPs were also given a memorandum from the Treasury on the estimated development expenditure for the year 2009. The Dewan has scheduled three days for debating and winding up of the Bill.

**Friday March 6, 2009**

### **Ministry to oversee 157 more villages**

KUALA LUMPUR: The Cabinet has approved 157 fishing and integrated villages to come under the Housing and Local Government Ministry and receive the necessary allocations for basic

amenities. Minister Datuk Seri Ong Ka Chuan said the ministry was now overseeing 450 such villages, with another 100 to be included later. "We want to make sure that we have enough allocations to develop the villages," he said.

Ong said that previously, the villages were not under the jurisdiction of any ministry and, as such, lacked development. "Most of the roads are not tarred and some do not have a drainage system," he told a press conference at his ministry yesterday. The 157 villages include Kampung Baru Minyak Beku in Batu Pahat, Kampung Pauh Lima in Kota Baru, Kampung Rata Bahau in Jempol, Kampung Wah Loong in Kampar and Kampung Sungai Lima in Klang. Ong said the villages could now set up development committees to administer themselves. "Besides upgrading the infrastructure in the villages, the ministry will also concentrate on human capital development, education and economic prospects," Ong said. He said his ministry and the Rural and Regional Development Ministry, which oversees Malay traditional villages, were cooperating to improve the livelihood of the villagers.

**Friday March 6, 2009**

## **250ha of forest reserve devastated**

**Story and photo by GEETHA KRISHNAN**

LOGGING with the sanction of the previous Selangor state government has devastated a large part of the Sungai Jelok Forest Reserve in the Hulu Langat district. According to Selangor Public Accounts Committee (PAC) chairman Lee Kim Sin, the approval for logging to be carried out on 202ha was given during a state executive council meeting on Nov 8, 2006. "This is for a proposed rubber estate project by Perbadanan Kemajuan Pertanian Selangor (PKPS). Following the exco decision, the Selangor Forestry Department issued a logging permit to a private company," Lee said during a site visit to the forest reserve.



**Sad state: Selangor Public Accounts Committee (PAC) chairman Lee Kim Sin (right) pointing towards the ravaged Sungai Jelok Forest Reserve.**

Lee, the state assemblyman for Kajang, said the logging activities were reported to the PAC in November last year, and by that time, 90% of the trees had been felled and bare patches had begun to dot the 250ha forest reserve. "This is shocking because there is no point in gazetting a forest reserve and then allowing logging activities to be carried out with the weak excuse of purportedly developing a rubber estate," Lee said.

The Sungai Jelok Forest Reserve is a hilly lowland dipterocarp forest. Its size has shrunk over the years due to development and logging activities. The forest reserve is a water catchment area for Sungai Jelok, a tributary of Sungai Langat. "After July 16 last year, Sungai Jelok overflowed its banks with alarming frequency. "We attributed this to land-clearing activities near the Kajang Prison but now we are sure the logging in the forest reserve is also a contributing factor," Lee said.

At present, upgrading work is going on at Sungai Jelok to alleviate the floods in Kajang. The logging is now viewed as a setback to the river-widening and deepening work. Lee said he would seek the state auditor's help to investigate the matter further and to seek clarification from the PKPS director and Selangor Forestry Department director as to why a forest reserve and water catchment area had to be sacrificed.

"Both the Hulu Langat Land Office and District Office have been instructed by the state government not to allow activities against sustainable development and yet this had happened," Lee said.

"It is bad enough that one part of the forest reserve has been turned into a stone quarry," he said. On Dec 19 last year, Selangor Forestry Department director Mohd Yunus Zakaria replied to Lee's letter on the logging activities in the forest reserve, saying that a logging licence was issued based on a decision made at the exco meeting on Nov 8, 2006. No further detail was given.

## **Friday March 6, 2009**

### **Fomca: Look into status of flood- mitigation projects**

THE Government should form a research-based institution by integrating relevant authorities to look into the status of 163 flood-mitigation projects funded under the Ninth Malaysia Plan (9MP). Federation of Malaysian Consumers Associations (Fom-ca) environment desk manager Piarapakaran Subramaniam said the institution could be tasked to collect data and facts related to floods. He said the various agencies should be better integrated with the Drainage and Irrigation Department (DID) to share knowledge and expertise. "There should be an integrated effort. The DID should tap into the database available in universities that have done many studies in urban drainage, lake and river management," he said through a statement yesterday.

Piarapakaran said this would help in policy-making and agencies get actual data on the flood situation. He was responding to floods that affected several parts of the Klang Valley on Tuesday and which resulted in a traffic gridlock for several hours. Piarapakaran also said all flood-mitigation projects had to be revisited to look into their progress and trouble-shoot problems before the projects were finished. "Now, we are just curing the problems when floods happen. We are not preventing the problem from happening," he said.

He pointed out that RM5.3bil was allocated for flood mitigation under 9MP but delays in their implementation were costing the public when floods hit residential areas. "Fomca regrets the failure of DID to complete projects according to schedule," he said.

**Friday March 6, 2009**

## **New padi growing area will be Johor's biggest rice bowl**

**By HAMDAN RAJA ABDULLAH**

MUAR: A 3,000ha plot near Semberong in Kluang will be developed into a padi growing area, state Agriculture and Agro-Based Industries Committee chairman Aziz Kaprawi said. Speaking to reporters in Sungai Balang recently, he said the Johor State Farmers Organisation would be given the right to develop the project commercially.

The area, when fully developed, could become the state's biggest rice bowl and it would also boost Johor's rice production. "The state had earlier identified areas in Mersing, Endau and Kahang for padi planting but they were not suitable," he said at the South Muar Area Farmers Organisation office.

Aziz said the state farmers organisation had been successful in several undertakings, which included big-scale farming projects hence earned the right to develop the padi project. On another matter, he said a contractor engaged to deepen Sungai Muar last year was only willing to pay RM50,000 compensation to 88 fishermen, not RM157,000 as requested.

He said the refusal had caused the state government to allocate RM107,000 from its own coffers to pay the fishermen, who were affected by the dumping of mud along the coastal areas. "We are very disappointed with the contractor who received a RM30mil contract to deepen the river estuary but dumped the mud along the coast. "However, the state will help the fishermen who have suffered losses after their fishing areas were damaged," he added.

**Thursday March 12, 2009**

## **RM60bil package designed to help economy, says DPM**

KUALA LUMPUR: The RM60bil stimulus package is not "a silver bullet" but designed to prevent Malaysia from slipping into a recession, said the Deputy Prime Minister. On views by several analysts that the second stimulus package only totalled RM15bil in direct government spending – as the remainder were in other forms such as government-guaranteed bank loans – Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said: "We have to look into consumption as well as investment".



**Water deal: Najib witnessing the exchange of documents between Johor state secretary Datuk Abd Latiff Yusof (left) and Treasury secretary-general Datuk Seri Dr Wan Abdul Aziz Wan Abdullah at the signing ceremony in Kuala Lumpur Wednesday. Looking on are Energy, Water and Communication Minister Datuk Shaziman Abu Mansor (behind Abd Latiff) and Johor Mentri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman.**

He said the package would achieve its desired impact because it was making available additional monies for private companies to invest, which was key to create economic activities and subsequently prevent recession. "To undertake investment you create more economic activities and this will make sure employment is maintained. "One of the key elements in the recovery process is making sure the banking sector is functional and credit is available for the industries. "If you don't, recession will be deeper," he said.

Najib said the three funds – guaranteed funds, equity investments and private finance initiatives – would generate more economic activities. He said this to reporters after witnessing the signing of agreements which saw Pengurusan Aset Air Berhad, a company under the Minister of Finance Inc., taking over water assets in Johor.

On the RM8.4bil projects under the 9th Malaysia Plan to be accelerated, he said they were mostly infrastructure projects, such as those under the Education Ministry. On concerns the full effects of the second stimulus package might come too late only in the fourth quarter of the year, Najib said some projects could take off immediately, citing those under the Education Ministry. He said the ministry had RM2bil worth of projects already tendered out, and with the allocation under the package, the projects could now kick off.

He said the Government would try to implement programmes under the RM60bil allocation this year, but it also depended on the take up from the industries, particularly for the three guaranteed funds. To a question, he said Budget 2010 would still be tabled around October this year. "There will be one more government budget," he said.

**Thursday March 12, 2009**

**Double track ready by 2014**

TAIPING: The Electrified Double Track Project from Ipoh to Padang Besar will be completed by 2014. Transport Minister Datuk Seri Ong Tee Keat said the project was now 20% completed. "The project is an effort made by the ministry to add value to our railway system," he said.



**Site launch: Ong (right) being briefed by Gamuda Berhad managing director Datuk Lin Yun Ling (second right) at the Larut Tunnel in Taiping Wednesday.**

Ong told reporters this after lunching the detonation of the 300m Larut Tunnel at Air Kuning near here yesterday. He said the project would create more job opportunities for the people. Asked if the project was on schedule, Ong said it was progressing well although the project faced a few problems such as relocation of squatters from the construction site. Ong also said the first service using the electric train was set to begin in November. "Travelling time from Ipoh to Kuala Lumpur and vice versa will take two hours 15 minutes including the stopovers," he added.

Earlier in his speech, Ong said the project would create an additional 6,000 jobs, in addition to the current 7,000 people being employed under the project. "More than RM10bil downstream work will also be created," he said.

The RM12.5bil infrastructure project involves the construction of two new electrified railway tracks across Perak, Penang, Kedah and Perlis. Construction of the project began in early last year.

## **Thursday March 12, 2009**

### **RM100mil allocation for walkways and skybridges with mini budget**

**By BAVANI M**

THE federal government's RM100mil allocation under the mini-budget for the construction of sky bridges and covered walkways between buildings around the Golden Triangle area is "a gesture of goodwill" to the residents of Kuala Lumpur, Federal Territories Minister Datuk Seri Zulhasnan Rafique said.

"The main objective of the mini budget is to stimulate the economy and what better way to achieve that than by spending money on projects that will benefit the people and, at the same time, enhance the image of Kuala Lumpur as a world class city," Zulhasnan said. He added that the money would be used to execute existing plans that have been in the pipeline instead of drawing up new ones. The minister added that the mini budget was crucial as the country approached a difficult period. "However, it is not a silver bullet and we must all play our part by focusing on the economy and cutting down on politicking," he said.



**Already in place: The Pavilion skybridge provides pedestrians with a way to get to the KL Convention Centre.**

Kuala Lumpur mayor Datuk Ahmad Fuad Ismail also said he was happy that the walkway project was finally coming through. The mayor said that a meeting would be held next week to discuss the details of the project, but, for the time being, the Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) had identified five locations stretching some 800 metres to build the walkways and bridges. "We have already done the designs and are currently studying how to make it pedestrian and disabled friendly," Fuad said.



**"It is not a silver bullet and we must all play our part by focusing on the economy" - DATUK SERI ZULHASNAN RAFIQUE**

The mayor said the project would be a joint collaboration between the DBKL and the private sector and once completed it would offer connectivity to offices blocks, malls, hotels, and train, rail and bus terminals. The pedestrian bridge and sheltered walkway project was mooted back in the late 1970s. The government had then hired a Hong Kong-based British firm to carry out a feasibility study.

The project, under the Economic Planning Unit (EPU), involved the expertise of traffic and town planners from different parts of the world and would have come to fruition if not for the Asian Economic crisis. The study involved 55km of connectivity – a system of pedestrian walkways and bridges that links up places like Bukit Bintang, Jalan Pudu, Sultan Ismail and Raja Chulan to the outer edges of the Golden Triangle.

It involved connecting pedestrian bridges and walkways along Jalan Bukit Bintang to Jalan Pudu, the Puduraya area, Jalan Raja Chulan, Jalan Tun Tan Cheng Lock, Chinatown, Pasar Seni, Masjid India, Jalan Tunku Abdul Rahman, Jalan Sultan Ismail, P.Ramle and other parts of the city where there is a high volume of commercial activities.

**Friday March 13, 2009**

**Drainage system blamed for poor water quality**

PETALING Jaya City councillor Derek Fernandez said that the cause of the poor water quality in the Bukit Gasing Education Forest is the drainage system in the area. He said this in response to a report in *StarMetro* on March 11 headlined “Bukit Gasing still needs help”.

Fernandez, the councillor in charge of Zone 12 (Sections 5 and 10), said: “When new drainage was built after the landslide at the entrance to the forest in 2007, nobody considered the effect of bypassing the natural bio-filtration which previously existed.



**Polluted water: Dr Wong (right) and Global Environment Centre River Care Programme coordinator Dr K. Kalithasan checking on the condition of the stream at the Bukit Gasing Education Forest.**

“The contracts were awarded under the previous administration and the design of the drainage was made without taking into consideration the existing “marshy” area, where plants and friendly bacteria play a vital role in water filtration. “Anybody who keeps ornamental fish understands that natural plants and friendly bacteria are vital in water filtration in natural ecosystems. The new drainage bypassed this and the new system itself is poor.”

Fernandez said there was a need to investigate how RM1mil was allegedly spent under the previous administration to address the issue. “We are calling for a meeting next week with Datuk Dr Wong Sai Hou, the president of Association of Backpackers Malaysia, the Global Environment Centre, Friends of Bukit Gasing and officers from the Petaling Jaya City Council’s Environment, Health and Engineering Departments to come up with an effective solution.

“We are more than pleased to work with them. Regrettably, this could have been avoided if the drainage system design was vetted by the stakeholders before the contracts were awarded.”

Fernandez said that this showed the importance of having consultations with the stakeholders in the decision-making process.

**Friday March 13, 2009**

### **Need to follow procedure before breaking in, says MPSJ**

THE Subang Jaya Municipal Council (MPSJ) said its personnel has been entering vacant premises suspected to be mosquito breeding grounds even before the Health Minister came out with his order. “However we do things according to the law under the Act that allows us to do so.

“It’s done only when there’s a requirement, especially if a particular area has recorded high dengue cases and we found that there are unoccupied houses within the area,” said a council



spokesperson when asked to comment on Health Minister Datuk Liow Tiong Lai's statement yesterday that local authorities can break into vacant property suspected to breed mosquitoes to carry out fogging. "First, we have to make sure the particular house is indeed vacant. This we will need to check with our Valuation Department to identify the home and the owner.



**All out war: Fogging being carried out to stop the dengue epidemic.**

"After that, we will serve a notice to the homeowner to ask them to clean their premises of which the time frame given is usually two weeks," said the spokesperson. If the owner fails to act, the council has to make a police report as a form of safeguarding itself. "We still have to follow procedure and there is no short cut to it. Otherwise the council can be taken to task for encroaching or trespassing into private property. "After we have informed the police, then only can we cut the gate's lock and enter the home to take photos in the presence of the police," he said.

He added that the Selangor health department has sent a health team to all local authorities in Selangor, and for the MPSJ, it has 120 personnel from the Petaling health district office to be shared together with the Petaling Jaya City Council (MBPJ). Meanwhile, the spokesperson said several areas have been identified as uncontrollable in the dengue disease, based on a trend that the council has been monitoring since January.

The areas are Zone 13 (Puchong Perdana, Puchong Indah, and Puchong Intan), Zone 14 (Puchong Permai), Zone 16 (Pusat Bandar Puchong), and Zone 19 (Lestari Perdana & Kota Perdana). The Petaling Jaya City Council Health and Environment Department director Dr Sadiyah Abdullah said it was necessary for local councils to break into vacant properties in their housing estates to carry out fogging activities, and it had been receiving numerous requests from the public to do that. "It is a necessary move. Many residents have come to us saying that the vacant property in their neighbourhood are worsening the dengue situation and they want our enforcement officers need to step in," she said.

The Selayang Municipal Council (MPS) president Datuk Zainal Abidin Azim said that the local authority and enforcement officers just cannot break into any vacant premises without permission from the owner. "We have to follow the law. Even the police can't simply break into a premises unless they have strong evidence that there is criminal activity going on. "If we break into any premises, the owner can sue us and the council will be in trouble. We have to ask permission from the owner before going in. "If there are dengue cases among the neighbours of the vacant property, then we have a valid reason to break into the premises," he said.

The Kajang Municipal Council (MPKj) has always carried out fogging activities in vacant houses by working with the police. Council president Datuk Hasan Nawawi Abd Rahman said the procedure encompassed serving a 14-day notice to house owners and then carrying out fogging. "But, we leave the breaking-in to the police.

**Saturday March 14, 2009**

## **LCCT plans unveiled**

**By LESTER KONG**

 [New LCCT will handle 45 million passengers yearly](#)

PETALING JAYA: KL International Airport's new Low Cost Carrier Terminal, located about 1.5km from the main terminal, will be able to handle 45 million passengers yearly.



**"With the new LCCT, KLIA would be able to handle up to 90 million passengers a year"**

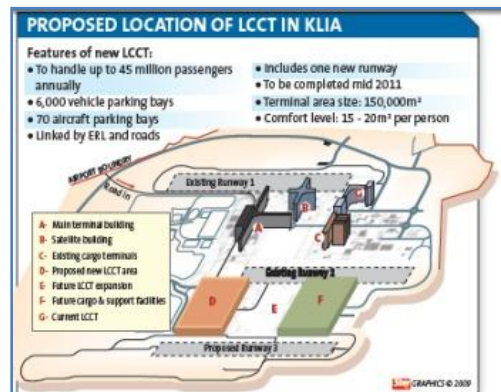
**- DATUK SERI BASHIR AHMAD**

A new 4km runway will also be built with the LCCT, which is expected to be operational in the third quarter of 2011. Unveiling Malaysia Airports Holding Bhd's (MAHB) plans for the new LCCT, its chief executive officer Datuk Seri Bashir Ahmad said work on the RM2bil project would begin in June.

"It will be designed to handle up to 45 million passengers a year and be connected to the main terminal via an extended Express Rail Link (ERL) and a new side road," Bashir said at a press conference yesterday. "With the new LCCT, KLIA would be able to handle up to 90 million passengers a year."

The present LCCT would then be reverted into a cargo handling terminal. The new LCCT, spread over 150,000 sq metres, would be larger than the main terminal with retail and food outlets to ensure passenger comfort. There are plans for a 6,000-vehicle parking complex, parking bays for 70 planes and an integrated transport hub for buses and taxis. "We are also taking the views of various airlines into account," Bashir said, adding that AirAsia had requested at least 95,000 sq metres for the new LCCT.

Bashir said 10,000 sq metres of the space would go towards setting up AirAsia's headquarters, which would be sited away from airport operation areas. He said landing and aircraft parking fees and airport tax would most likely remain unchanged.



**“The Government decides on all aeronautical charges and airport tax, not us,” he said, adding that MAHB would fund the project through loans. “We have received letters of offers from several sources,” he said, adding that tenders would be called in the next few months.**

Bashir added that KLIA's master plan took into account long-term use of infrastructure and land to handle up to 120 million passengers annually. Currently, only 30% of the entire complex and land are used. A joint proposal to build a new low cost carrier terminal in KLIA East@Labu, Negri Sembilan, by Sime Darby and AirAsia was rejected.

Bashir said the plan to build the new LCCT near the main terminal was part of the National Airport Master Plan for Malaysia to strategically develop all 24 airports in the country over 50 years. “This is to ensure KLIA will grow into a significant regional hub.”

**Tuesday March 17, 2009**

## **Minister wants Penang Sentral project expedited**

By DERRICK VINESH

SECOND Finance Minister Tan Sri Nor Mohamed Yakcop wants the RM2bil Penang Sentral transportation and logistics hub project to be expedited to create spillover economic activities to the locals. Disappointed that the project had been delayed by a year, he ordered its developers Malaysian Resources Corp Bhd (MRCB) and Pelaburan Hartanah Bumiputra Bhd as well as the local authority to resolve any related problems as soon as possible. “I do not think there is any major problem with the Penang Sentral project.



**Nor Mohamed (right) chatting with several associationmembers after closing the annual general meeting in Butterworth.**

“But if there are problems, they must be settled in the shortest time possible,” he said after opening the Penang Malay Hawkers and Petty Traders Association’s 26th annual general meeting in Bagan Ajam, Penang, on Sunday. Although the developers completed a RM5mil temporary bus terminal near the project site in March last year, only Rapid Penang buses have been given the privilege to use it since July. Other local buses and interstate express buses have to continue operations from a pothole-ridden open space that has been earmarked for the Penang Sentral project. Makeshift ticketing counters and hawkers are currently running their businesses under a flyover near the Butterworth Railway station.

Nor Mohamed said the Seberang Prai Municipal Council recently concluded talks with the hawkers concerned to have them relocated to a temporary hawker centre opposite the temporary bus terminal. The Penang Sentral project’s first phase, which involved the construction of permanent bus and taxi terminals with access to the railway station and ferry terminal, was originally scheduled for completion by July 2011. The former bus terminal, sited at the Penang Port Commission (PPC) Complex, could not be used after fire razed the complex in May 2001. On Rapid Penang’s threat to possibly give away some 200 new buses to RapidKL if the state government did not help find a suitable depot for it to house the buses, Nor Mohamed said he would talk to Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng on the sidelines of the Parliament sitting this week. He said: “I am preparing a note to discuss with the Chief Minister because Rapid Penang wants to do something good for Penang. “I am confident he will cooperate with us as it will show if the state is willing to cooperate with the Federal Government for the benefit of Penangites.”

**Tuesday March 17, 2009**

### **Parliament - Ong: Open tenders for Sibu airport project**

AT THE DEWAN RAKYAT REPORTS BY LEE YUK PENG, ZULKIFLI ABD RAHMAN, LOH FOON FONG AND LESTER KONG

TENDERS will be called for the expansion of the Sibu airport, Transport Minister Datuk Seri Ong Tee Keat said. “Projects related to the Sibu airport will be managed via tender,” he told Chong Chieng Jen (DAP – Bandar Kuching), who had asked whether projects related to developing airports would be awarded via direct-negotiation or open tender.

Deputy Energy, Water and Communications Minister Datuk Joseph Salang Gandum said the Government had to spend RM50mil to replace old water pipes in Selangor so that water services were not disrupted for hundreds of thousands of residents in the state.

"It is not a subsidy. But the Government cannot run away from its responsibility to ensure people have water services even though the concessionaire and water asset situation is uncertain," he told Charles Anthony Santiago (DAP – Klang).

He said most of Petaling Jaya could be affected if the old pipes were not maintained. He also said a reservoir and water treatment plant would be built to bolster water supply for the Kuala Lumpur International Airport this year in view of the airport's expansion. He said it did not matter whether the pipes belonged to water supply concessionaire Syabas or the Government because it was more important to replace the pipes.

**Wednesday March 18, 2009**

## **Minister says there is potential in cattle and fish breeding sectors**

**By HAMDAN RAJA ABDULLAH**

MUAR: The Agriculture and Agro-Based Industries Ministry has decided to dedicate the month of March to focus on developing growth in the cattle and fish breeding sectors. Its minister Datuk Mustapa Mohamed said the aim was to increase livestock and the dairy products in line with the nation's food production policy. Speaking to about 500 cattle and fish breeders in the state, he said the ministry planned for Malaysia to produce more cattle and dairy products than Indonesia in the near future.

"At present Indonesia is the biggest producer of cattle in the region, but with commitments and hard work, we can overtake Indonesia. "Just like the rubber and palm oil where we used to be the top producer before Indonesia overtook us, we want to beat Indonesia with cattle and dairy products," he said when launching the Johors Veterinary Month 2009 celebration recently.

Mustapa said breeders would be encouraged to give more efforts to their stocks while those with funds and interested in related ventures could visit the veterinary departments this month. He said besides technical knowledge, consultancy and related assistance, those with funds could also learn about the type of investment available in the industries.

Mustapa said the Government would provide all the necessary assistance to help those who had the interest in investing in the industries, including in marketing. He said all veterinary department officers had been directed to go down to the people and meet the breeders as often as possible to show they cared. The minister also said that many FELDA schemes had become integrated commercial farming areas where some 170,000 heads of cattle were being bred.

Mustapa added that the integrated farming programme had yet to receive good response from private plantations and the Government hoped they would look into the venture. "The Government has allocated about RM700mil for agriculture under the recent mini-budget and we hope to boost production soon. " We also urge factory workers who lost jobs due to the economic slowdown to return to their villages and take up farming or cattle breeding," said Mustapa.

**Wednesday March 18, 2009**

### **Outboard engine boat owners to receive cash rebate soon**

**By JACK WONG**

KUCHING: Outboard engine boat owners in Sarawak will receive cash rebate of between RM350 and RM705 in a week's time. Some RM22mil are expected to be paid out to more than 31,700 outboard engines registered up to Sept 30 last year. Kapit Division in the upper Rejang River has over 8,000 registered outboard engines.

The cash rebate is similar to the rebate car owners received when they renewed their road tax following a sharp increase in fuel prices in June last year. Many Sarawakians, including school children, rely on river transport to go to town and school daily. The payout for engines with 10 horsepower (HP) or less is RM350. It is RM500 for 20HP or less and RM705 for 40HP or less.

Deputy Chief Minister Tan Sri Alfred Jabu said an owner, however, was only entitled to claim one cash rebate eventhough the latter might have registered several engines of similar HP. He said owners who had engines in all the three categories (10HP, 20HP and 40HP) could claim for two cash rebate each.

Jabu who is also the state Infrastructure Development and Communications Minister, said those outboard engine owners who had yet to register with the authorities must do so before April 15 to be eligible for the rebates. However, their claims would have to be verified first by the authorities. The rebates would be paid out until October through the Resident and District Offices. The federal government had recently lowered diesel prices to RM1.80 per litre, down from RM2.45 per litre, in rural Sarawak. Boat owners could get their fuel supply from floating oil barges in major rivers.

**Wednesday March 18, 2009**

### **UTM's RM53mil sports complex to be completed soon**

JOHOR BARU: Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) expects to create a large pool of national athletes once its new RM53mil sports complex is completed. University deputy vice chancellor (Student Affairs and Alumni) Prof Dr Mohd Tajuddin Ninggal said he expected the complex to be

completed by early next year. "It will be of international standards and we hope we will be able to produce more athletes for the Sports Ministry," he said.

The complex, situated near the university campus, will feature a wide range of facilities including a running track, stadium, Olympic size swimming pool and gym. Prof Dr Mohd Tajuddin said the university was also in the process of ensuring it had adequate staff and trainers for the complex so that students were well trained. He added that although there were other local universities that were known for its sports faculties, UTM was moving forward to build its reputation in sports. Some of the Malaysian athletes who emerged champions at the 14th ASEAN University Games were UTM students, he said.

Prof Dr Mohd Tajuddin said that the new complex would provide a platform for students to be actively involved in sports and develop their athletic skills.

**Wednesday March 18, 2009**

### **Liow: Use Malaysian goods**

KUALA LUMPUR: The Government should encourage the use of Malaysian-made products especially in government projects, said MCA vice-president Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai. He said the move would help local manufacturers and entrepreneurs weather the economic downturn.

"Malaysians should also rely less on imports and use more local products to help stimulate the country's economy," he said at a press conference after a dialogue with Chinese guilds and associations representatives at Wisma MCA here yesterday.

MCA president Datuk Seri Ong Tee Keat and other MCA leaders were also at the dialogue, which was attended by more than 100 representatives from 27 Chinese guilds and associations. Liow, who is Health Minister and the MCA's Chinese guilds and associations consultative council chairman, said the representatives also hoped that the Government would reduce electricity and water tariffs. "They said the tariffs are high now and in view of this challenging period they hope the Government will reduce the rates," he said.



**Meeting in session: (From left) Liow, MCA president Datuk Seri Ong Tee Keat and Association Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Malaysia (ACCIM) president Tan Sri William Cheng attending the dialogue with leaders of Chinese guilds and associations at Wisma MCA in Kuala Lumpur.**

Other issues brought up at the meeting included the increase in foreign workers' levy which the representatives said would burden the business community. Liow said the party would compile all suggestions and problems and submit them to the relevant authorities. "The party and the Chinese guilds and associations will meet from time-to-time to find measures to help improve the country's economy," he said.

**Wednesday March 18, 2009**

### **RM377mil to boost research and development in varsities**

**By ALYCIA LIM**

PUTRAJAYA: The Malaysian Research Institute (MRI) has been given US\$100mil (RM367,899,000) to boost research and development in public universities. Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Khaled Nordin said that once the draft of the MRI structure had been endorsed by the Cabinet, the institute would facilitate Malaysian universities in collaborating with prestigious higher education institutions overseas.

"The Higher Education Ministry is setting up the organisational structure of the MRI, which will aid research activities in the centres of excellence in some public universities," said Khaled, when presenting the second Higher Education Ministry progress report in Putrajaya yesterday.

"For this reason, Khazanah Nasional and Petronas have given an endowment of US\$100mil to this institution."

Khaled said that he hoped more people would apply for the postgraduate scholarships announced under the mini budget on March 10. To date, the ministry has received 16 applications. There are 500 places available at PhD level and 10,000 at Masters level in public universities, as well as at other universities like Universiti Tenaga Nasional, Multimedia University and Universiti Teknologi Petronas.

Khaled added that with the new electronic programme management office (e-PMO) in place, the ministry could now keep tabs on the implementation of its strategic plans. On another issue, he said service charges under the National Higher Education Fund Corporation (PTPTN) would be reduced from 3% to 1%, from this year for old and new loan applicants. "This was in view of the edict by the National Fatwa Council last June requiring PTPTN to change its method of giving out loans."

**Wednesday March 18, 2009**

### **Decision known by mid-April on language for Maths and Science next month**

**By KAREN CHAPMAN**



PETALING JAYA: The Cabinet is expected to make a decision on the language of instruction for Mathematics and Science in mid-April. Education Minister Datuk Seri Hisham-muddin Tun Hussein said this was the earliest he could possibly present it to Cabinet, in reference to whether the teaching of the two subjects continues in English or reverts to Bahasa Malaysia and mother tongue (Chinese and Tamil).



**"There is no hurry anyway as we have spent RM3bil since the introduction of the policy in 2003." - DATUK SERI HISHAMMUDDIN TUN HUSSEIN EDUCATION MINISTER**

"It is not possible to table it this Friday as a memorandum is being circulated to various ministries for feedback. "There is also time to hear what the delegates have to say at the Umno assembly next week," he told *The Star*.

Hishammuddin said parent-teacher associations nationwide were also holding their annual meetings and he had asked that they make this a part of their agenda. "There is no hurry anyway as we have spent more than RM3bil since the introduction of the policy in 2003," he said. Almost 100,000 teachers were involved and over six million students had gone through the policy, he added.

"Two-and-a-half months since the release of the UPSR results for the first cohort (who were taught the two subjects in English from Year One in 2003) is not long," he said.

On a report in online news portal, *Malaysian Insider*, quoting sources that the policy was likely to revert to Bahasa Malaysia and mother tongue for primary schools, Hishammuddin said this was not possible. "Any policy decision must go through the Cabinet. The decision in 2003 was also made by the Cabinet," he said.

Education director-general Datuk Alimuddin Mohd Dom urged the public to refrain from speculating on the policy. "A memorandum on the policy was circulated to several ministries for feedback last week," he said.

The Teaching of Mathematics and Science in English (ETeMS or better known by its Malay acronym, PPSMI) policy was implemented in phases, beginning with Year One, Form One and Lower Six students in 2003 during the tenure of former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad. It was reported last week that Dr Mahathir defended the use of English to teach Science and Mathematics, saying it was necessary to ensure Malaysia could keep up with the rest of the world. He said it would be better for people to know the language so they could get the information themselves.

**Wednesday March 18, 2009**

## **Objections presented for several PJ projects**

**By JADE CHAN**

EIGHT public hearings were held at the Petaling Jaya City Council (MBPJ) office on Monday to look into the suggestions and objections for several proposed projects in the city. Among those mentioned were the proposed developments at the former Matsushita factory in Jalan SS 8/1, the former Kelana Seafood Restaurant in Jalan SS7/13, the Baywatch Cafe in Jalan PJU 1/42, a commercial block in Jalan SS6/6 and a mixed development in Bandar Sri Damansara.

PJ councillor Derek Fernandez, who chaired the hearings, said the next step would be to compile all the objections and comments that had been made and tabled them before the One-Stop Centre (OSC), which was the committee that approved development. "The OSC will make a decision based on the law, guidelines and objections that have been heard. "In some cases, residents have requested for further information; therefore we will defer the decision until the information is exchanged between the objector and the applicant. "We would like the objector and the applicant to meet beforehand and try, as far as possible, to resolve their differences. What they can't resolve, they can come back to us for a decision," he said.

According to Fernandez, a major problem that is stopping development is insufficient infrastructure. "Because the existing infrastructure can't take it anymore, the developers will be denied their rights to maximise on densities and plot ratios. This is also substantially and adversely affecting residents. "If the Federal Government wants to spur economic development in the country, it must put all its resources into public transportation and infrastructure. "Now is the opportunity for the Federal Government to work with the state government and build new infrastructure like drains and roads," he said.

"There is also a need to have an efficient, cost effective, user-friendly public transportation system which is run by the government. It cannot be privatised because the goal of privatisation is profit."

Fernandez said the MBPJ might have to impose development charges on developers in the future, which would go towards an infrastructure contribution fund. "The charges will be based on the type of development. The money is put into a centralised pool and used to improve infrastructure," he said, adding that it was also important to ensure that the job was carried out properly by the contractors. "Unlike the Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL), the MBPJ has never had a substantial development contribution fund, but this may become a reality."

Seri Setia assemblyman Nik Nazmi Nik Ahmad highlighted his concern that the three projects in his constituency (SS8, SS7 and SS6) involved the Damansara-Puchong Highway, which is already Class F in terms of traffic flow, which he said is "one of the worst". "While I agree that the current situation is not the developers' fault and that they can't be expected to solve it, the proposed projects must take into account this issue and how the project should not contribute further to the existing problem."

He stressed on the importance of adhering to the allowable plot ratio, as, according to him, the proposals for the three projects in his constituency had exceeded the plot ratio requirement that is allowed by the MBPJ and Town and Country Planning Department.

"I'm not saying we're against development. The land is already in the hands of the developer so we have to be practical," said Nik Nazmi.

"How we go about doing it is that we regulate the development, in terms of ensuring requirements on height, density and traffic flow are adhered to. "Greater attention must be paid to bus terminals and shuttle services and how to integrate it into the public transportation system," he said.

Fernandez noted that the MBPJ practises transparency and public participation in its decision-making process and had invited reporters and representatives from the All-Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Residents Association Coalition and Real Estate and Housing Developers Association Malaysia to attend the hearings. "We even listened to residents who didn't have the legal rights to object," he said.

## **Wednesday March 18, 2009**

### **Vessels seized for transferring sand illegally**

PONTIAN: Two tug boats and a bulk carrier were seized off the Tanjung Piai waters for illegally transferring sand.

Johor Baru Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agencies (APMM) personnel, who were patrolling the sea, spotted the tanker about 3.7 nautical miles south of Tanjung Piai at 11.50am recently. Both tugboats, Oasis 5 and MBS 77 are registered in Batam, Indonesia, while the Sanko King (bulk carrier) is registered at Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam

Operation Commander Captain, Mohd Zubil Mohd Som said that the agency's speed boat that was patrolling the sea detected two tug boats with a barge and a bulk carrier. "Upon searching the Sanko King ship, the officers found out it was transferring the sand onto the tugboats. "It is illegal because they do not have permit or permission," he said in a statement here.

He added that all the vessels were seized and sent to the agency's investigation unit for further investigation. He said that the agency was constantly patrolling the waters to prevent any smuggling activities.

Anyone with information on any illegal or smuggling activities is urged to contact the agency at 07-2199403 or 07-21999405.

**Thursday March 19, 2009**

### **Efficiency the key to budget stimulus success, says Najib**

KUALA LUMPUR: The risk in dealing with the still-evolving global crisis is if the Government is not doing enough, says Finance Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

With the announcement of a historic second stimulus of RM60bil, the biggest amount in the nation's history, the Deputy Prime Minister added that it was not a matter of "doing too much" but rather the efficient implementation of the stimulus package.

Najib said a technical committee had been set up to regularly meet and monitor the implementation. This committee would then report to a steering committee chaired by him.

"I will then report to the ultimate beneficiaries of the effort, the Malaysian people.

"They are the appropriate judges of the mini budget's success," he said in a letter to *The Wall Street Journal*, which was published yesterday.

Najib said he was confident the world would recover from the global crisis and Malaysia would be best positioned to take advantage of that recovery when normal trade levels resumed.

**Thursday March 19, 2009**

### **KLIA shuttle and rail link plan for new LCCT**

KUALA LUMPUR: The Express Rail Link (ERL) train services are likely to be extended to the new low-cost carrier terminal that will be built by 2011. Express Rail Link Sdn Bhd chief executive officer Dr Aminuddin Adnan said they had been asked to consider extending the current ERL line to the new LCCT to cater for an increase in passenger load.

"If all goes well, we are planning to extend the KLIA Express and KLIA Transit lines right up to the new LCCT. "We are also thinking of having a shuttle service between LCCT and KLIA that will likely run for 24 hours," he told *The Star*.

Finance Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak announced recently that Malaysia Airports Holdings Bhd (MAHB) would build and operate the new RM2bil LCCT near the KL International Airport. On Wednesday, MAHB managing director and chief executive officer Datuk Seri Bashir Ahmad said the new LCCT should be able to handle 30 million passengers annually, compared with the present 15 million.

He said the new LCCT, which was expected to be completed in the second half of 2011, would be near the main terminal and was at a "very good location." It is learnt that the new LCCT would be about 2km from KLIA. The KLIA Express is a 28-minute direct train ride from KL Sentral to KLIA. KLIA Transit currently leaves from KL Sentral but makes several stops along the way,

including at Bandar Tasek Selatan, Putrajaya and Salak Tinggi before reaching KLIA. Both services end at 1am.

On ERL's proposed bus shuttle service from Salak Tinggi to the current LCCT, Dr Aminuddin said they had completed their trial run and were now gathering data to determine the demand and feasibility of the service.

The bus shuttle service, he said, would enhance the transport service to LCCT and would cater more to passengers wanting an easy, convenient connection to LCCT via KLIA Transit.

## **Thursday March 19, 2009**

### **Rep told to retract claims over funds**

THE Selangor Religious Council (MAIS) has threatened to sue Hulu Klang assemblyman Saari Sungib if he does not retract allegations that unspent funds amounting to millions of ringgit have been transferred out from the Selangor Tithes Board's (LZS) accounts, reported *Berita Harian*.

MAIS chairman Datuk Mohamad Adzib Mohd Isa said the allegations, claiming the funds were transferred out in December last year, were lies aimed at tarnishing MAIS's image. He insisted that there had never been any attempts to transfer out funds from LZS. Set of universal cyber laws to stop abuse on Internet

> There is a need for a set of universal cyber laws to put a stop to the abuse on the Internet, reported *Utusan Malaysia* in its views column yesterday.

CyberSecurity Malaysia chief executive officer Lt-Kol (R) Husin Jazri said the Internet offered a host of benefits, but there had been abuses as well. He added that it was also time for Malaysians to wise up to and realise that intimate photographs could be misused at any time. The best prevention was not to give anyone the opportunity take such pictures, he said.

## **Thursday March 19, 2009**

### **A successful project**

**By CHEN PELF YEEN**

ALOR GAJAH: Recent effort by the state Fisheries Department to help save the critically endangered hawksbill turtle from extinction has been successful. Department's director Rosmawati Ghazali said 471 turtle landings were recorded last year with 57,776 eggs collected compared to only 390 landings with 45,345 eggs collected in 2007. "We are glad that our effort to save the turtles is paying off.

“More members of the public, in particular the fishermen living along the coast here, are more aware of the importance of saving the hawksbill turtle from extinction,” she told reporters after handing out 20 licenses to fishermen at the Padang Kemunting Turtle Management Centre recently.

One of the more effective ways, she noted, was getting more villagers along the coast here to get involved with monitoring and collection of turtles eggs which would be sold back to the department. “Those with licenses to collect the eggs are offered RM1.30 per egg and they are paid on the spot for them. “This has encouraged the villagers not to sell the eggs to outsiders but to bring them to us instead,” she added.

Previously, she said that payments to the fisherman for the eggs was delayed up to two months and this led to them selling the eggs in the open market. It was reported last year that the Fisheries Department was forced to step up patrols along several stretches of beaches in Alor Gajah to prevent turtle egg theft as they were fetching RM2.50 and RM5 per egg in the local market.

Rosmawati said joint education programmes for coastal villagers and students were held over the years. Fishermen were also introduced to special nets and hooks that would not pose a threat to the turtles, she added.

Malacca has the second highest number of hawksbill turtle landings in Malaysia with average of 350 landings recorded over the past year. Among the landing spots include Tanjung Bidara, Padang Kemunting, Telok Gong and Kem Terendak with Pulau Upeh recording the highest landings with 108 turtles last year.

**Friday March 20, 2009**

**RM27bil for subsidies**

**By MAZWIN NIK ANIS**

PUTRAJAYA: The Government has set aside RM27bil in the recently-announced mini budget to finance various subsidies to ensure that Malaysians will not be overly burdened during the current economic slowdown, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said.

He said an additional RM830mil had also been set aside for more social safety net programmes. While the Government had not lowered personal income tax, other forms of assistance were in place for the people, he added.



**Tech talk: Najib getting an insight into e-filing from the IRB's team after launching the Electronic Services Campaign yesterday. On the right is Second Finance Minister Tan Sri Nor Mohamed Yakcop. — Bernama**

Najib said corporations would enjoy tax relief worth RM1.5bil as announced in the mini budget and this was aimed at spurring more activities to boost the economy. "The Government still needs revenue not only to generate economic growth but also for expenses. There are salaries to be paid, pensions to be released and at the end of the year, people are hoping for bonuses.

"It will spell trouble if we start borrowing money to pay for these expenses. We provide relief to taxpayers but we also have to be realistic. We need cash flow," he told reporters after launching the Inland Revenue Board's Electronic Services Campaign yesterday.

Najib, who is also Finance Minister, was asked if there were plans to reduce the income tax for individuals as taxpayers were feeling the pinch because of the economic slowdown. In his speech, Najib said the IRB's revenue collection of RM90bil last year was a new record, adding that efficient tax collection was important.

"The more revenue we collect, the more we can do for the people. We must support such efforts while at the same time, the Government is committed to ensuring that the people are not burdened. "We constantly look into ways to provide tax relief," he said, adding that in Malaysia, only 10% of employees pay income tax.

Najib said the IRB's efforts to provide electronic services should be supported as this would do away with dozens of tax forms.

## **Friday March 20, 2009**

### **DBKL prepared to work with private sector**

THE Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) is prepared to work with the private sector when identifying suitable locations in the city for the construction of pedestrian walkways and skybridges. According to KL mayor Datuk Ahmad Fuad Ismail, apart from working with Syarikat Prasarana Negara Bhd (SPNB) which runs the light rail services in and around the capital city, the DBKL also plans to get property developers in the Golden Triangle commercial hub to take part in the project.

"We will call for a meeting with all concerned soon to discuss ways to better accommodate the current public transport system and facilitate a comprehensive and integrated system by linking pedestrian walkways and skybridges between buildings," Fuad said.

He said it was not just the government that must provide such facilities as the private sector also had its role in helping to improve the city. Fuad cited the Pavilion and Times Square as examples, saying that although the distance between the two malls was short, people were not willing to walk because of the hot weather. "And when they take a taxi, they get angry because the charges are very high. This is where building owners can help out by providing the much needed linkages to integrate the system," he said.

Fuad said emphasis would be given to areas that had a high concentration of single-mode vehicles such as private cars and taxis. He said the DBKL would help by providing all the data collected from the city's Integrated Transport Information System (ITIS) and CCTVs in the city. "Over a million vehicles enter the city daily, and we have to study ways to accommodate and co-ordinate the various public transport modes and also help to enhance the catchment coverage," he said.

"That's why the pedestrian linkages are essential as it not only provides convenience and connectivity, but it is also in line with the safe city concept and it would even cut down on accidents," Fuad said.

Prasarana group managing director Datuk Idrose Mohamed said the company was working on improving its connectivity with the Ampang Line and Kelana Jaya line. "We have 400,000 people taking the buses and 350,000 more taking the LRT, so it is essential to improve the connectivity and integrate the public transport system to make it better," Idrose said.

## **Friday March 20, 2009**

### **Fear of soil erosion**

**By KRYSTLE LOW**

KUANTAN: Numerous complaints of soil erosion have kept Teruntum assemblyman Chang Hong Seong busy recently. One of the complaints was about soil erosion by residents living near Sungai Galing off Jalan Teluk Sisek. In a recent visit to the site, Chang said an allocation of RM180,000 would be requested from the Rural and Regional Development Ministry to resolve the problem.

"The allocation will be made under the basic infrastructure projects for rural areas to replace the existing pipes on the riverbank. "The replacement of pipes to bigger ones will provide a better flow of the river water and minimise soil erosion. "Once this first phase is completed, work will proceed on the second phase near the junction of Jalan Beserah," he said, adding that the entire project would cost about RM400,000.

Chang said soil erosion had also occurred along the Taman Teruntum beach. He said residents of Tembeling Resort had expressed their concern of strong waves during high tides eroding the river bank. "The residents are worried that if nothing was done, the sea water may overflow onto the road and cause flash floods.



“Such a situation may also endanger the people on the beach,” he said, adding that the matter had been brought to the attention of the state Drainage and Irrigation Department (DID).

DID site engineer Saiful Rizan said the department proposed to build a retaining structure to stop the water from overflowing to the road. “It seems to be the best solution for the moment,” he said

**Tuesday March 24, 2009**

### **Human Rights Commission Bill seeks more transparency in appointing members**

KUALA LUMPUR The Human Rights Commission (Amendment) Bill was tabled for first reading at the Dewan Rakyat Tuesday. It seeks to make the process of appointing people of various religious, political and racial background as commission members more transparent. The tenure of the commission members is also extended from two to three years. Minister in the Prime Minister’s Department Datuk Seri Nazri Abd Aziz tabled the bill.

The bill states that a committee would be formed for the Prime Minister to consult with regards to the appointment of the members before tendering his advice to the Yang diPertuan Agong. The committee comprises the Chief Secretary to the Government, chairman of the commission and three other persons appointed by the Prime Minister.

The three could be former judges and former members of the commission but not those active in politics or enforcement officers. The Prime Minister, however, is not bound by the opinions, views and recommendations of the committee.

**Tuesday March 24, 2009**

### **RM250bil liquidity in banking and capital marts, says Najib**

 [Najib: Banks to continue providing loans](#)

KUALA LUMPUR: The country has a huge liquidity of RM250bil in the banking and capital market which can be tapped into, said Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

Najib, who is also Finance Minister, said the Government wanted banks to continue providing loans to businesses especially during these difficult financial times and would provide the institutions with incentives.



**Joint effort: Najib (right) and Muhyiddin inserting cards to officially launch the MIDF symposium and SME book in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.**

“In facing the economic crisis, we have to ensure that the financial system and banking sector can channel out loans and credit to businesses and entrepreneurs. As long as they cannot do that (ensure availability of credit), we will not be able to ensure the economy recovers,” he told reporters.

He was speaking at the opening of the MIDF (Malaysian Industrial Development Finance Berhad) Bumiputra Entrepreneur Symposium yesterday. Najib cited the scheme for small-medium industries provided by the Credit Guarantee Corporation Berhad (CGC) under Bank Negara’s supervision, which will provide an 80% guarantee for loans.

“We want to give incentives to banks, so that they do actual lending to create a tipping point effect, by taking up 80% of the risks. Banks, like everyone else, are averse to risks and are cautious about non-performing loans.

“By mitigating the risks, the Government will bear contingent liability to provide incentives for banks to lend. Hopefully lending and the availability of credit will be at a level that will sustain the requirements for businesses to function,” he added.

Najib also said the Government would establish, within the next two months, a financial guarantee institution to widen the utilisation of the bond market. The new institution would have a start-up capital of RM1bil and be separate from the CGC, but monitored by Bank Negara. Najib said that from the capital, an estimated RM15bil in bonds could be raised.

“This is credit from the bond market. We need this because there are some very good companies but they have AA or A-status. Only AAA-status companies have access to the bond market,” he said, adding that the initiative would be on a long-term basis, beyond the financial crisis.

Najib also offered advice to those venturing into business that they must start with an important basis of “know-how” and not “know-who.”

Those who want to enter business must also have the right attitude and readiness. They must also have good business strategies and be innovative instead of entering businesses that were already too saturated, he said, citing travel agencies as a field that was too saturated.

**Tuesday March 24, 2009**

### **Faster government projects with e-tender**

KUALA LUMPUR: The Works Ministry has launched an e-tender management system to check bureaucracy and to promote transparency. Works Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Zin Mohamed said contractors should start using the new system if they do not want to be left out in the tender-bidding process. "We can reduce the processing time from four months to four weeks when proposals are submitted via the e-tender system, he said.

The system would help develop the National Construction Procurement Repository, the data from which could be used for construction forward procurement, construction price index analysis, construction schedule of rate and national material consumption pattern, he added.

Mohd Zin said this after launching the national e-Tendering Initiative at the CIDB convention centre here yesterday where 97 projects worth RM3.3mil were given out via the balloting process. Projects could be approved faster with greater efficiency using the e-tender system that was created by the Works Department and the Construction Industry Development Board.

Mohd Zin said the tenders are advertised online at [www.etender.com.my](http://www.etender.com.my) and in the mainstream media. The Tender Opening Committee will evaluate tenders online. CIDP e-Construct Services acting chief executive officer Dr Idzuan Alias said the system was as secure as e-banking, where bid for tenders could also be done online at real time. Earlier in his speech, Mohd Zin called on Class F contractors to upgrade their status as it was impossible for the government to create jobs for all of them. Furthermore, of the 40,000 Class F contractors only 17,000 are really active, he said.

**Tuesday March 24, 2009**

### **Parliament - RMAF has enough pilots, says Abdullah**

THE Defence Ministry spent RM280mil last year and RM225mil in 2007 to carry out maintenance work on RMAF aircraft, Defence Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said.

He told Lim Lip Eng (DAP – Segambut) in a written reply that the RMAF had enough pilots and crewmen to fly the various aircraft operated by the force. Abdullah said the RMAF had 74 pilots trained to fly 19 Hawk fighter jets in the RMAF inventory, 40 pilots for 16 MiG-29 fighter jets and 32 pilots to fly eight F/A-18D jets. "Six of the seven pilots allocated to fly the latest Sukhoi SU-30MKM fighter aircraft are still undergoing various training programmes," he added.

To another written question, Abdullah said the Defence Ministry had been allocated RM10.65bil for the ministry's management and operational budget for this year. A total of

RM4.25bil or 40% of the allocation were used to finance emolument payments for the ministry staff, he said.

In an unrelated matter, Home Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar told Wee Choo Keong (PKR – Wangsa Maju) that the Immigration Department arrested 42 illegal immigrants during an operation in the Jalan Petaling area last year.

**Tuesday March 24, 2009**

### **State gives green light for project**

THE Selangor Economic Action Council (MTES) has given the green light to the Kajang Square project proposed by the Kajang Municipal Council (MPKj). When contacted, state local government, research and studies committee chairman Ronnie Liu said the funding was coming from the federal government. “We have approved it on our side because we were made to understand that the Kajang Stadium is underused and the new project will still maintain the greenery,” he said.

According to sources, the project has been downsized from its original design following the objection expressed by various quarters. Kajang state assemblyman Lee Kim Sin has also expressed his dissatisfaction with the state government’s decision and the manner in which the matter was handled. “I was not consulted as an elected representative and neither was public opinion sought. I urge the state government to reconsider its decision even if funds are coming from the federal government,” he said.

**Tuesday March 24, 2009**

### **Plan to redevelop Kajang Stadium**

**Stories by GEETHA KRISHNAN**

KAJANG residents will have to bid adieu to the Kajang Stadium if the proposed Kajang Square project takes off. The plan is to redevelop the stadium into a 2.52ha multi-million ringgit sports complex with futsal and badminton courts, field for tai chi, yoga and aerobic activities, a children’s playground and kiosks selling various wares. The RM4.5mil project would mean the sacrifice of an iconic structure built in the late 1970s. The Kajang Stadium is a prominent landmark as it is located smack in Kajang town. Its main entrance faces Jalan Kelab while the back portion looks out to Jalan Cheras leading to the bustling Jalan Besar.

In its heyday, many important football league and club matches, involving the likes of celebrated legendary football players Mokhtar Dahari and M. Chandran in action, were played at the stadium to capacity crowds.



Kajang state assemblyman Lee Kim Sin has termed the Kajang Square project as a grandiose scheme. "I disagree with the concept of centralised facilities when the present ones need upgrading. There is a serious lack of green spaces in the new housing estates and more facilities can be offered in the older neighbourhoods," Lee said.

"The Bangi sports complex about 15km away is centrally located and well-equipped with facilities. Hence, there is no need for a similar facility in Kajang," Lee told the *StarMetro*. He said pointed out that traffic congestion was also a serious problem, given the Kajang Stadium's location. Although parking is available at the Kajang Stadium, the bays are shared between the Dewan MPKj, Bangunan Datuk Nazir and the Medan Satay Kajang. The Kajang Uptown bazaar is also held in the vicinity on Fridays and weekends from 10pm to 2am.

Lee also made references to the Satay Museum and Kajang Point, two projects under MPKj which he viewed as pure wastage of public funds. The RM1.2mil museum project was stalled in 2001 and was only revived after an additional RM1.6mil was pumped in. The Kajang Point, with food stalls and souvenir kiosks, was built in 2004 and was only opened recently as part of the proposed RM1.8mil Kajang Waterfront project along the stretch of the Langat River near the stadium. The Kajang Point has yet to attract the crowds.

**Tuesday March 24, 2009**

### **ECER office set up in Kuantan to monitor projects**

KUANTAN: Related state-wide projects will be monitored effectively with the setting up of the East Coast Economic Region (ECER) Development Council office in Sri Kuantan Square, Jalan Teluk Sisek here. "The opening of this office plays a very important role in Pahang's development," said the council's chief executive officer Datuk Jebasingam Issac John. "It is proof that the central government is really committed in helping to carry forward the ECER projects, as well as bringing in development to Pahang," he added.

Jebasingam said one of the main roles of the state's office was to monitor future ECER projects and those in progress for the state. He said as ECER's automotive assembly, production and distributing hub, many job and business opportunities would be created for the locals. "In fact, with the support of the state education institutes, the locals are able to get more than a good paycheck.

"Pahang also has a huge potential to expand as a tourism sector," he said, adding that Pahang had amazing natural resources, including the highland holiday resorts and Taman Negara, which could be further developed and promoted to visitors. "Hopefully, the existence of this office would be useful in simplifying the process for future investors and existing companies in collecting information about ECER's projects," he said.

Mentri Besar Datuk Seri Adnan Yaakob was present to launch the office recently.