

KERATAN AKHBAR

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EPU to discuss Melaka Waterfront Economic Zone



THE Economic Planning Unit (EPU) will discuss the refinement of the Melaka Waterfront Economic Zone (MWEZ) proposal under the 12th Malaysia Plan (12MP).

Minister in the Prime Minister's (PM) Department Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed said the Melaka government has requested attention be given to the MWEZ as the state is currently not included in any economic corridor.

"The EPU will hold discussions at the technical level before going to a higher level. As an EPU director, I will discuss and refine this application further," Mustapa told a press conference after an engagement session on the 12MP with the Melaka government recently.

According to him, the MWEZ proposal has already been presented to the National Physical Planning Council.

"This proposal has been presented to me, and the PM has also been informed.

"However, we will refine further in terms of implementing this concept," he added.

Additionally, Melaka had requested the federal government to consider the construction of a 52km coastal highway in the state.

Mustapa said the government had allocated several incentives under the eighth economic stimulus package for the tourism sector in Melaka as it is the main economic driver for the state.

Meanwhile, Melaka Chief Minister Datuk Seri Sulaiman Md Ali noted that Melaka is taking its own initiative to build MWEZ as the economic corridor for the state.

“I am looking to create a new corridor or a ‘coastal corridor’ — to make Melaka’s beach a tourist spot,” Sulaiman said.

He stressed that Melaka could not rely solely on weekend getaway attractions to drive the state’s economy.

“Looking at the previous concessions that have been approved for more than 20 years, there is no coordination. So, we are rebranding by creating a corridor which could be a game changer for Melaka,” he said.

He said the MWEZ will improve Melaka as a tourism state and as a business centre for 24 hours daily.

“This (MWEZ) will create employment opportunities, business for the people of Melaka and opportunities for fresh graduates,” he added.

Moreover, Sulaiman said the Melaka government had applied for an allocation of RM10 billion from the federal government for various MWEZ projects under the 12MP.

“However, the actual amount that will be approved by the federal government is based on priority as it will review how much can be assisted,” he said.

To date, the total allocation received by Melaka through the first and second Rolling Plans of the 12MP is about RM1 billion and the allocation for other projects will be included in the next Rolling Plan.

During the engagement session, Mustapa noted that the federal government had allocated RM429 million for Melaka compared to RM391 million in 2021.

He assured that the government will make efforts to address poverty and strengthen inclusivity, as well as achieve a decent standard of living in Melaka.

“Measures will be focused on education and training, entrepreneurship, social protection for all households especially the poor,” he added.