

KERATAN AKHBAR

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Rafizi: Due diligence on KXP project vital to avoid future burden



Economy Minister Rafizi Ramli said it's important that the project is able to contribute to Kedah's socio-economic development, and not become a burden to both the state and federal governments in the future. -NSTP/AHMAD MUKHSEIN MUKHTAR

ALOR STAR: The federal government is willing to consider a detailed study on the financial sustainability of the proposed Kulim International Airport (KXP).

Economy Minister Rafizi Ramli said it's important that the project is able to contribute to Kedah's socio-economic development, and not become a burden to both the state and federal governments in the future.

"I understand the views and strategic projects that the state government is focusing on, including KXP and others.

"While I am open to the proposal, my focus is on ensuring these projects achieve financial sustainability independent of government support, whether from the state government or the federal government in future.

"With any project that has this kind of financial sustainability and benefits the people, I'm sure it will not be a problem for any government. But our concern is that the projects may seem fine at a glance but upon closer scrutiny, there are concerns with financial capabilities.

"That is why, due diligence must be done and I am open to this process," he told reporters after attending the 12th Malaysia Plan Midterm Review Engagement and Roadshow at Royal Kedah Club here today.

Present was caretaker Kedah Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Muhammad Sanusi Md Nor.

Rafizi also said this is in line with the unity government's stand to focus on the financial sustainability of projects.

"Sustainability plays a role, and there are many aspects to it. One common perception is that sustainability is primarily about the environment, and that is true.

"However, nowadays sustainability is largely about financial aspects. We have to make sure everything we do is financially sustainable, or else it will become a burden in the future," he added.

Sanusi said the development of KXP is important for the country's economic growth, particularly in the northern region.

"International investors who have expressed a commitment to actively participate in KXP are highly confident it holds the potential to become an economic game changer.

"Hence the state government hopes for an opportunity to present the significance of this project to the people and the nation directly in the presence of the prime minister and the cabinet."

He added that the country could also miss the chance to develop Asia Pacific's largest maintenance, repair & overhaul (MRO) hub.

"If we don't do it (an MRO hub) in Malaysia, it is our loss. The largest MRO hub in Asia Pacific is being built in Kuala Namu, Sumatera in Indonesia," he added.

On June 18, Sultan of Kedah Al-Aminul Karim Sultan Sallehuddin Sultan Badlishah called on all parties to put aside their personal differences to realise KXP.

He said KXP, which is part of the proposed Kedah Aerotropolis mega project, deserved fair consideration as it is vital for economic growth in the state and the country.