

Sultan urges study on weekend

Johor Ruler wants Friday-Saturday implementation in all sectors

JOHOR BARU: Sultan Ibrahim Ibn Almarhum Sultan Iskandar has urged the state government to study whether Johor's official Friday-Saturday weekend can be implemented in the private sector as well.

Sultan Ibrahim said parents working in the private sector had complained that they did not have enough time to spend with their school-going children because they needed to work on Fridays.

"Due to this, I urge the state government to study the suitability of synchronising the off days to Friday and Saturday in all sectors," he said during the opening of the second sitting of the state assembly yesterday.

In November last year, the Johor Ruler announced that the state's rest days would be changed to the two days to make it easier for Muslims to conduct Friday prayers. The change came into effect on Jan 1 this year.

It was reported that the private sector, however, decided to continue with the Saturday-Sunday weekend to avoid complications in business matters, especially when dealing with foreign companies.

On a separate matter, the Ruler expressed satisfaction with Johor's financial report, which stated that it had recorded a surplus of RM485mil compared to a deficit since 2000.

"The state can now plan a balanced expenditure and go ahead



Assembly in session: Sultan Ibrahim opening the second sitting of the state assembly in Johor Baru. Also present are Tengku Mahkota Johor Tunku Ismail Sultan Ibrahim (left) and state Speaker Datuk Mohamad Aziz. — Bernama

with development projects for the people," he said.

The Ruler said earlier this year, the state government had also brought up a proposal to increase the allowance of the state assemblymen.

"Taking into account the state's financial standing and the rising cost of living, I approve the increased allowance," he added.

On the issue of Pulau Batu Puteh, Sultan Ibrahim decreed that a special team be set up to appeal against

the decision on the island made by the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

He added that the ICJ decision favouring Singapore on the island's ownership was a result of "outsiders" handling the matter.

The Ruler also said that the Federal Government's suggestion of imposing a minimum price of RM1mil for property that could be purchased by foreigners was only suitable to be implemented in Kuala Lumpur.

"I suggest that foreigners be allowed to buy high-rise property valued at a minimum of RM500,000, but for landed property, they should only be allowed to purchase houses that are valued more than RM2mil," he said.

The Ruler criticised Petronas' oil and gas project in Pengerang, adding that the company was not giving enough opportunities for locals to handle contracts related to the project.

Berjaya Group set to transform Stulang Laut

JOHOR BARU: Stulang Laut will undergo a major transformation with a theme park and high-end commercial area among the new features.

Berjaya Group has proposed to the Johor government to conduct reclamation work on a 24.68ha site in the area.

Its founder Tan Sri Vincent Tan said the group was waiting to begin the first phase of the project.

"Berjaya Group owns the land and we want to develop it to keep with the progress taking place in Johor. Berjaya has invested throughout Malaysia, but Johor has a special place in my heart as I was born in Batu Pahat and I want to see the state being progressive," he said after handing out more than RM1.2mil through his Better Malaysia Foundation to 47 charitable organisations in the state yesterday.

Tunku Aminah Maimunah Iskandariah, who is the daughter of Johor Ruler Sultan Ibrahim Ismail Ibn Almarhum Sultan Iskandar, graced the event.

Tan said Berjaya Group would also refurbish and revamp the duty-free area which housed the Berjaya Waterfront Hotel and Duty-Free Shopping Complex.

Tan said Berjaya Group aimed to change the area into a family-orientated zone, adding that the group also had other projects in the pipeline for Johor.