

## **The STAR**

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### **Adnan: Human survival is more important By ROSLINA MOHAMAD**

KUANTAN: The Pahang government will not mind sacrificing any land area if it can provide lucrative earnings that can be translated into scholarships and financial aid for the people, said Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Adnan Yaakob. However, he said the state was yet to make a decision on a proposed RM1bil cement factory by a conglomerate at Gunung Jebak Puyuh in Maran.

“If we have to give up the area, which has numerous caves, in return for sizable earnings and benefits for the people, we will do so.

“This is my opinion. If the area needs to be relinquished without affecting residents and the environment, and in return we get money for the poor and scholarships, we will allow the project. “It will help fill the state’s coffers,” he told reporters after chairing the weekly state exco meeting here recently.

Adnan was asked to comment on the project reported by TV3 recently pertaining to an area rich in clay and limestone deposits. The report said the project could have adverse effects on the mountain which was more than 300 million years old. The area has limestone caves with stalagmites and stalactites and rare flora species.

To a question that the mineral deposits were underground and the project could cause environmental damage, Adnan said the state would look at the reports before giving the nod.

“We will listen to the opinions of geologists, historical experts and environmentalists.

“There are those who want to look at the stalagmites and stalactites but the poor will continue to suffer.

“We will consider the needs of the people and their opinions,” he said.

In reply to another question, Adnan said the state could make an official stand to not have any development.

“Land need not be opened, water not sold, islands left untouched and no trees cut.

“But the Federal Government will need to provide RM1.2bil annually to manage the state.

“If I get a commitment from the Federal Government on this, I will freeze all development.

“There will be no biotechnology, biodiversity or infrastructure and we can forget about ECER (East Coast Economic Region Master Plan).

“You can visit Pulau Tioman and Gunung Tahan without having to build hotels and airports,” he added.

Adnan said that Pahang had always been accused in environment issues with critics making judgements on preserving stalagmites and stalactites more than on human survival. The cement factory is proposed on a 240ha site. It is expected to occupy 80ha and produce three million tonnes of cement annually. Its production will be double that of the conglomerate’s factory in Bukit Sagu, Kuantan, in operation for the past five years.

If approval is obtained, the project will commence next year.