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Mahathir-Homes

BUILD LOW-COST HOMES FAST, PM TELLS STATES AND PRIVATE SECTOR

IPOH, Aug 3 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today reminded states and the private sector to erect low-cost homes fast not only to meet national housing needs but also to help developers and buyers financially.

Unnecessary delay in starting work would only jack up project costs as well as loan interest for developers as well as delay the returns, he said.

Buyers would also suffer from burdensome loans whereas they could speedily occupy or lease out homes completed fast, he said.

" Normally it makes good business sense to develop a project fast. It will not only save developers on project costs but also save the buyers from the burden of steep loans," he said launching an express low-cost housing project in Taman Bercham Raya here today.

The prime minister also simultaneously launched the project's second phase involving 180 units priced at RM33,000 a unit.

The project is being developed by Zaman Teldan Sdn Bhd, a subsidiary of the Emkay Group.

Dr Mahathir said all quarters should value time and appreciate getting a job done on or ahead of schedule since an unnecessarily delayed project would benefit no one.

He cited the speedy construction of the Kuala Lumpur City Centre's Petronas Twin Towers, currently the world's tallest building, and Putrajaya, the new federal administrative capital south of here as exemplary.

By erecting them fast, their developers not only saved costs but also enabled various sectors to benefit from their early completion, he said.

The developer of the Twin Towers, he said, took only four days to set up each of the buildings' 88 floors while the Putrajaya builders completed the job in less than three years, including building one of the landmarks there, the Putra Mosque, he said.

Meanwhile, at a press conference later, the prime minister said that as for the government, its efforts towards expediting low-cost housing projects include communicating with banks to speed up approval of bridging loans sought by developers.

At the government officers' end, he said, they have been required to speed up approval of projects or amendments to project plans.

Dr Mahathir assured prospective buyers that while the government was rushing to put out more low-cost homes, it would not tolerate shoddy workmanship or compromise on quality.

In fact, the prime minister said, there were plentiful low-quality units although they took longer time to complete.

He noted that there was robust construction of low-cost homes since the National Economic Action Council (NEAC) issued directives emphasising speedy implementation of projects.

However, the quantum completed was still below that targeted under the Seventh Malaysia Plan, he said.

" Construction of low-cost homes was previously slow-paced because developers preferred to build high-end houses for bigger profit margin. We now find that they are building more low-cost homes together with high-cost units," he said.

In fact, said the prime minister, state governments have been reporting to him the progress of their low-cost housing projects fortnightly as

directed.

According to the Seventh Malaysia Plan mid-term review report, only 50.4 per cent of the targeted number of low-cost and medium-cost homes had been completed.

On construction of low-cost homes in Putrajaya, the new federal administrative capital south of Kuala Lumpur, Dr Mahathir said that it would depend on demand and a sizeable segment of the area had been earmarked for low-cost housing.

The Emkay Group, which would build Cyberia, a residential-cum-commercial development in Cyberjaya, the world's first intelligent city, also had plans to build low-cost housing near Putrajaya, he said.

The company would jointly venture into low-cost housing development with Ceupacs, the largest public sector employees' union to build residential units for low-income government servants, he said.

The company was looking for a suitable for such project, he added.

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