

9th Malaysia Plan: Body to monitor projects

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PUTRAJAYA: The strategies have been laid out. Now comes the execution. It was made clear yesterday that the implementation of projects under the Ninth Malaysia Plan would be closely monitored by a special body headed by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

The newly-formed National Implementation Action Body, which involves all ministries, will watch closely the performance of agencies implementing major projects.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak is deputy chairman, while ministers are members of the body. The NIAB secretariat, which comes under the Economic Planning Unit, is headed by Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Mohd Effendi Norwawi. Abdullah said the projects would be closely monitored, especially those with high impact and a multiplier effect on the economy.

The body, he said, would recommend action to be taken against officers found to have caused delays in completing the projects. Abdullah, at a Press conference yesterday, expressed confidence that under these watchful eyes, no projects under the 9MP would be abandoned midway.

"There will be no room for that," the Prime Minister said. "The idea is to facilitate, not to frustrate. If they are not doing the right thing, we will call them in one by one. We want to expedite the implementation of projects. If we do this, we will succeed."

Abdullah said as implementing new projects was not easy, they must be properly planned with the right action taken. This, he said, should reduce if not eliminate the problem of projects being abandoned or delayed.

"When projects are abandoned, extra costs are incurred," he said.

Abdullah added that it was also the agencies' responsibility to ensure sufficient human capital to complement the projects before initiating them.

"We do not want to build hospitals and not have enough doctors, or schools without teachers. This would make the people angry and frustrated. We have busy days ahead. Start working and move on. God willing, we can do this."

Abdullah said the NIAB would ensure that such potential problems were addressed by agencies before project implementation. He said it was also crucial that discussions were held with industry players to ensure adequate manpower. This, he said, was to prevent job opportunities aimed at benefiting the people being channelled to foreign workers.

Stressing the need for well-planned implementation, Abdullah cited the example of a tourism project in the East Coast Corridor, where they needed to know the size of the area, infrastructure and manpower required.

This, he said, was where State Governments should come in.

Asked if problems were anticipated in the implementation of projects in the States, Abdullah said the State Governments had pledged their full co-operation.

"We need to make early plans and discussions to ensure smooth implementation," he said, adding that good co-operation from State Governments could prevent delays.

He said projects not completed under the Eighth Malaysia Plan and carried forward into the 9MP would also be completed.

Source: NST | www.nst.com.my