

NEW STRAITS TIMES

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BLESS way to help businesses

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PUTRAJAYA: An online one-stop centre to handle business licensing applications, monitoring and approval, will be launched by year-end.

The Business Licensing Electronic Support Services (BLESS) is one of the latest decisions by the Pemudah taskforce aimed at reducing red-tape and making it easier to do business in Malaysia.

BLESS will reduce time taken to issue licences through the use of composite forms to cover various applications.

The service will be implemented in stages, starting with the manufacturing sector between October and November, and for the hotel industry by mid-December.

Pemudah has also reduced the approval time for environmental impact assessments. Instead of five weeks, the Department of Environment will now take three weeks to assess EIA reports.

Another facility that will speed up land application matters is the e-tanah programme, scheduled to be launched next month. It will cover land administrative matters such as disposal of land titles, temporary occupation licences, registration of ownership, redelineation of boundaries, land mergers, mortgage transfers and quit rent.

These improvements to the public delivery system were presented to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi who met the task force members yesterday.

Abdullah was briefed on Pemudah's progress since it was launched on Feb 7.

"I am very happy as the task force's achievements have surpassed my expectations. Its decisions will reduce delays. All of this will reduce corruption and the tendency to ask for bribes to speed up processes.

"At the same time, there will be less cost in doing business, less frustration and less



Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi says the recommendations will reduce graft

backlog, so there are good effects for all concerned," Abdullah said after the meeting.

Pemudah has also made proposals which have implications on national policy. These, Abdullah said, would have to be discussed by the cabinet first.

On Pemudah's working group on socio-economic and affirmative action policies, Abdullah said the stand was that implementation of such policies, such as the awarding of certain tenders to Bumiputera only, should be stated clearly.

"Let us make clear the rules of the game, then people can decide whether to play or not."