

Speed up business approvals

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PM: Investors facing too many procedures

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PUTRAJAYA: How long does it take a foreign investor to get approval to build a factory in Malaysia?

According to the World Bank, 281 days. In Thailand, it takes only 127 days, and in Vietnam, 133 days.

Too many procedures are slowing down the approval process for foreign investors, and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi wants government agencies to speed things up.

Addressing some 3,000 senior government officials here yesterday, Abdullah read out excerpts from a World Bank report which compared the procedures and number of days for foreign investors to start businesses and build factories in several countries.

"The report says an investor needs to fulfil 25 procedures in Malaysia to build a factory, Singapore 11, Thailand nine, and Vietnam, 14.

"To start a business, an investor needs to follow nine procedures which will take 30 days in Malaysia, five procedures over six days in Singapore, and two procedures over two days in Australia.

"Which country would investors select?"

He said a special task force to improve the public sector's competitiveness had been set up. It will be headed by Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Sidek Hassan and a corporate figure who will be identified soon.

Abdullah said too much red tape had resulted in the perception that the delays were intentional and there was corruption involved.

"You are exposed to temptations when there are too many procedures. The corrupt act of the minority has affected the image of the civil service," he lamented.

"We are trying to compete with other countries. We are not at *kampung* or national level anymore. We have moved into the international league. Other countries are our competitors," he added.