

# Call to speed up approvals and payments

NST- 9/2/2007

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Hotel owners, property developers and contractors want government bodies to speed up the approval and payment process for them to carry-out business efficiently.

This is their common grouse when it comes to dealing with red tape.

The government has set up a high-level special task force to cut red tape and improve delivery of public service to lure investments.

For example, to set up a hotel, a company needs to get at least 50 licences from various government bodies, said Shaharudin M. Saaid, executive director of the Malaysian Association of Hotel Owners.

"You have to go to a number of authorities, from the licensing of the buildings to the construction authorities," Shaharuddin said.

While there have been attempts to address this, the initiative was not standardised and thus not all government authorities practised it.

Builders want local authorities to help speed up approvals for matters like building plans, and the issuance of certificate of fitness for occupation of completed properties.

They said state-land transfers could be faster if managed by district offices.

State-alienated and leasehold tracts come under the state government's purview.

"(At present) it is time consuming and property developers have to incur higher costs," said Ng Seing Liong, president of the Real Estate And Housing Developers Association Malaysia.

The body represents some 1,100 developers in Peninsular Malaysia.

Ng suggested that the process be done electronically.

Contractors have highlighted the issue of slow payment by government agencies and government-linked companies for jobs done.

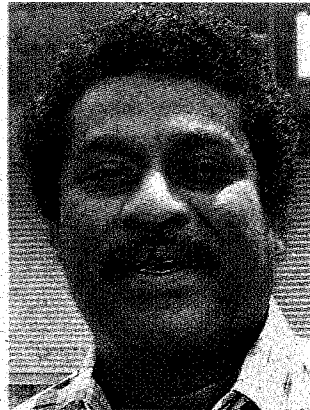
"Hopefully, following the setting up of this dedicated task force to improve the public delivery system, late payments to contractors will be a thing of the past," Master Builders Association of Malaysia president Patrick Wong said.

Also, contractors are also looking forward to timely approval and certification of projects.

Contractors also wish for stringent monitoring and effective enforcement by the au-



**Patrick Wong of Master Builders Association hopes that late payments to contractors will be a thing of the past**



**P. Sivakumar wants government departments to entertain applications from non-Bumiputeras for contracts and permits**

thorities on controlled building materials like cement and steel bars.

In Johor Baru, businessman P. Sivakumar wants government departments to entertain applications from non-Bumiputeras for contracts and permits.

He cited several incidents where policy-makers stated that contracts and permits were for all but this was not the case on the ground.

"I have applied for small contracts from local authorities and a taxi permit for my friend.

"And when I submitted applications together with a recommendation letter from a minister, I was told that I was not qualified as I was not a Bumiputra."

Sivakumar said flaws in the delivery system had to be addressed fast to boost the economy.