

States agree on way to speed up projects

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PUTRAJAYA: State governments have given their "ayes" to a new method of speeding up land development, including for high-impact projects and homes built under the "build then sell" concept.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said the consensus was reached at the National Local Governments Council meeting here yesterday.

Present at the meeting were Housing and Local Government Minister Datuk Seri Ong Ka Ting, Natural Resources and Environment Minister Datuk Seri Azmi Khalid as well as mentris besar.

Najib said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi would announce the method and concept in detail on April 13.

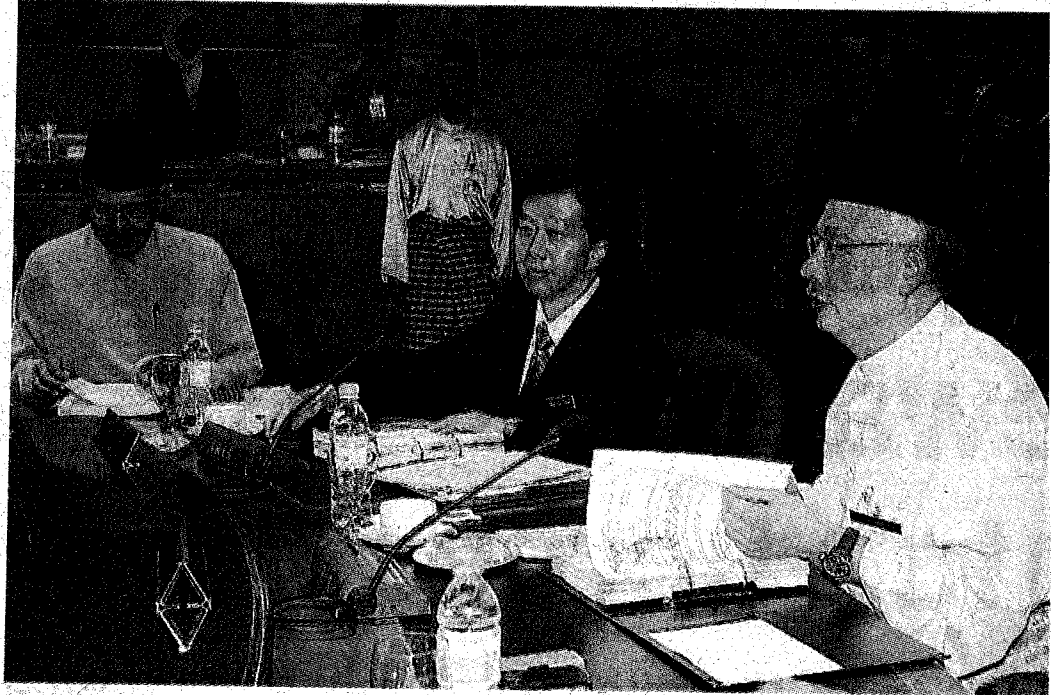
The method would be executed immediately after the announcement, Najib told reporters after chairing the meeting, which also proposed local council presidents to be appointed Commissioner of Buildings.

This is to ensure better monitoring and maintenance of buildings once strata titles are issued.

Asked if local authorities had the expertise to detect landslides, such as that which occurred in Putrajaya, Najib said assistance was needed from technical departments.

"Not all local authorities have such expertise," he said, adding that he was waiting for a full technical assessment on the landslide.

On the meteorological department's warning that heavy rain was expected over the next few days, Najib said local authorities were prepared for evacuation.



In session: Najib chairing the Local Government Council Committee meeting at Putrajaya yesterday. Next to him are Ong and Azmi.

They were also monitoring projects that needed flood prevention measures.

On the Iskandar Development Region in Johor, Najib said the Federal Government has agreed in principle to draw foreign investors and provide

them flexibility at the IDR.

This, he said, would be explained to Johor Umno leaders.

Bumiputras would be offered some business deals in the IDR, he added.