



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim looking at a model of a Residensi Suria Madani project after the groundbreaking for a housing project in Taman Desa, Kuala Lumpur, yesterday, PIC BY AIZUDDIN SAAD

COMFORT FOR THE PEOPLE

# 'GOVT WON'T NEGLECT NEEDS OF CITY FOLK'

**We will not entertain opposition to affordable housing projects, says Anwar**

FUAD NIZAM  
KUALA LUMPUR  
news@nst.com.my

**T**HE government will not entertain opposition to affordable housing projects, including objections from the "elites", said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

He said his administration would not neglect the needs of city folk, most of whom are from the low- and middle-income groups.

"A city's greatness is not defined solely by impressive landmarks or skyscrapers, but by the comfort it provides to its people.

"There are always objections to public housing, including this one here in Taman Desa," he said in a speech at the groundbreaking for the Residensi Suria Madani housing project here.

It was reported that residents' groups in Taman Desa have opposed the project.

Yesterday, 16 residents' groups wrote to Anwar to object to what they call "excessive development" that has led to traffic congestion. They said their objections were not taken seriously by the government.

In his speech, Anwar said he had received text messages from his friends who claimed the project would be disruptive and lead to cleanliness issues.

He said he would ensure all concerns were addressed, but that government was "clear" about its

approach to housing.

He said there were proposed developments in affluent areas.

"We should not stop that, it's not an issue. I don't advocate conflict between groups."

Anwar said he had instructed that affordable housing projects in the city be expedited to meet high demand and to ensure that the homes were comfortable and well-equipped with facilities.

"If you delay approvals, costs will increase."

He said companies do not want to incur losses and this could lead to corruption, with housebuyers ultimately ending up paying more.

He said he instructed the Federal Territories Department and Kuala Lumpur City Hall to speed up matters for Madani housing projects in the capital to ensure low-income groups would get homes as soon as possible.

He said some B40 and M40 folk have waited 10 to 20 years to own an affordable home.

He said affordable housing projects should include stalls for petty traders and hawkers.

"Housing project for low- and medium-income groups must be comfortable. There should be a green area, a big playground for children, a hall for the community and a place of worship.

"These are some of the must-haves that should be set (by developers)," he told Bernama.

Anwar said a city's greatness is measured by the government's ability to serve and safeguard the interests of all residents, irrespective of their socioeconomic status.

"You cannot build a city that separates people. I know individuals who used to take pride in Kuala Lumpur because of the (Petronas) Twin Towers.

"But what about the tens of thousands of people without

homes of living in crowded areas?

"How about buildings like this (Seri Perlis) that were built 50 years ago with one room, one toilet and there are six children? We can't ignore these issues. These are things we have to look into."

Present were Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Federal Territories) Dr Zaliha Mustafa, Housing and Local Government Minister Nga Kor Ming, Chief Secretary to the Government Datuk Seri Shamsul Azri Abu Bakar and Seputeh member of parliament Teresa Kok.

Kok said she appreciated Anwar's efforts to meet the people's housing needs.

However, she said, Taman Desa had 10 new projects, involving 5,887 residential units, and the latest project would bring that number to 8,229 units.

"If every home is occupied by four people, the Taman Desa population will rise by 33,196 people.

"Under PlanMalaysia's community facility planning guidelines, the government will need to add 288 primary and secondary school classrooms to cope with the population increase."

She said based on the guidelines, the government would also need to set up an appropriately sized health clinic, build community halls and increase police presence in the area.

The Residensi Suria Madani project by developer Mah Sing Group Bhd on a 0.99ha plot of land in Taman Desa involves the construction of two residential blocks with 800 units, measuring 800sq ft. The units will be sold at RM200,000 each.

Page 1 pic: A model of the Residensi Suria Madani housing project in Taman Desa, Kuala Lumpur.