

'Expedite highway approvals'

SEREMBAN: Approvals for the development of new highways should be done expeditiously so that toll rates can be kept low, says Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

The Prime Minister said development costs must be properly managed and approvals should not be obtained through corruption.

“I want the Works Ministry, the Malaysian Highway Authority (MHA) and PLUS to ensure that the approvals for new projects can be sped up.

“This can be done if we are all responsible and realise that these projects are for the people,” he said during the reopening of the Seremban R&R (southbound) area along the North South Expressway here yesterday.

Anwar said the cost to build and manage highways is often raised and when this goes up,

> SEE NEXT PAGE

Payments for approvals has to stop, says Anwar

> FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

toll rates will go up in tandem.

“We cannot afford wastage or leakage. Giving payments in return for approvals has to stop,” he said.

Citing an example, Anwar commended the Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) which approved the Residensi Suria Madani housing project for the B40 and M40 groups in Taman Desa in Kuala Lumpur, which he launched on Aug 29, in a record 45 days.

“If the developer had to wait two years to get approvals, cost will surely go up as bank loans will have to be serviced.

“But the developer managed to fulfil all conditions and got the approval fast.

“So, people waiting for houses for decades in a place like KL will finally get them,” he added.

Anwar said the Perak government also successfully processed the approval, within three days, for the Kerian Integrated Green Industrial Park (KIGIP), which is one of the largest industrial projects in the country managed by bumiputra companies.

“This shows that it can be done if we know our priorities to develop the nation and help the people, including providing job opportunities to the rakyat,” he added.