

## AYER KUNING BY-ELECTION

# 'RM6.13m projects in Tapah announced before nomination day'

**PUTRAJAYA:** The government's announcement of projects worth RM6.13 million in Tapah was made before nomination day for the Ayer Kuning by-election.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said the government would issue a warning if any projects were announced during the campaigning period.

"That (government project)

was before nomination. If it happens after that, we will issue a warning. It is not allowed," he said after the Finance Ministry's monthly assembly.

To ensure a free and fair election, Anwar, who is also finance minister, said the by-election must not involve government machinery or allocations.

"Candidate nomination must not involve government machin-

ery or allocations.

"This includes after nomination, up until polling day. That is the government's decision."

The Coalition for Clean and Fair Elections (Bersih) had described a development project announced by Housing and Local Government Minister Nga Kor Ming as an abuse of government resources.

Nga said RM6.13 million had been allocated for 33 infrastruc-

ture projects in Tapah, an area that includes the Ayer Kuning constituency.

Bersih said this was a breach of fair election practices.

Later, Communications Minister Datuk Fahmi Fadzil reiterated the importance of adhering to election campaign regulations, particularly the prohibition on announcing government projects or allocations.

The Ayer Kuning by-election will see a three-cornered fight between Barisan Nasional's Dr Mohamad Yusri Bakir, Perikatan Nasional's Abdul Muhaimin Malek and Parti Sosialis Malaysia's K.S. Bawani.

The vote will be held on April 26, with 31,897 voters eligible to cast their ballots. The by-election was called after the death of Umno's Ishsam Shahrudin on Feb 22.