Do not use govt machinery, funds for campaigning: PM

> Announcement of RM6.13m allocation for 33 projects in Tapah made before Ayer Kuning by-election nomination'

PUTRAJAYA: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has warned all parties not to use government machinery or allocations when campaigning in the Ayer Kuning state by-election.

Anwar, who is also finance minister, said the government's stance is clear - the use of government machinery or allocations from the time of nomination until polling day is not permitted.

He said the announcement of a RM6.13 million allocation by Housing and Local Government Minister Nga Kor Ming for 33 development projects in the Tapah parliamentary constituency, which includes the Ayer Kuning state seat, was made before the nomination day for the by-election.

"That was before nomination, If it's after that, we have to issue a warning, it's not allowed," he said after the Finance Ministry's monthly assembly yesterday.

On April 10, Nga announced that the ministry had approved an allocation of RM6.13 million for 33 development and public infrastructure projects under the Sentuhan Kasih 3.0 programme.

The move has been criticised by Bersih (Coalition for Clean and Fair Elections), which alleged that the channelling of funds and development projects to areas facing elections constitutes a misuse of government resources.

Bersih was reported as saying that such actions go against the principles of free and fair elections, Bernama reported.

Meanwhile, the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) has taken immediate action to resolve poor internet and telecommunications coverage at 27 locations within the Ayer Kuning state constituency.

It said in a statement that the move followed a directive from Communications Minister Datuk Fahmi Fadzil, who raised concerns over the matter.

It added that several proactive measures have been implemented by telecommunications service providers under MCMC's directive to ensure satisfactory services, especially in areas involved in the upcoming Ayer Kuning by-election.

Priority areas identified include the nomination centre at Dewan Merdeka Tapah, 21 polling stations across the constituency, the media centre at the Batang Padang District Information Office and the Air Kuning and Sri Bidor National Information Dissemination Centres.

"As of 6pm on Sunday, all service providers, namely CelcomDigi, Maxis, Telekom Malaysia, U Mobile and YTL, have submitted, updated and improved action plans to MCMC.

"Initiatives include the optimisation of existing transmitter stations, installation of temporary transmitters and infrastructure sharing among service providers."

Additionally, an MCMC complaints counter has been set up at the Batang Padang PPD in Tapah, operating from 9am to 9pm between April 12 and 26, to handle issues related to telecommunications, postal services and other matters under the commission's purview.