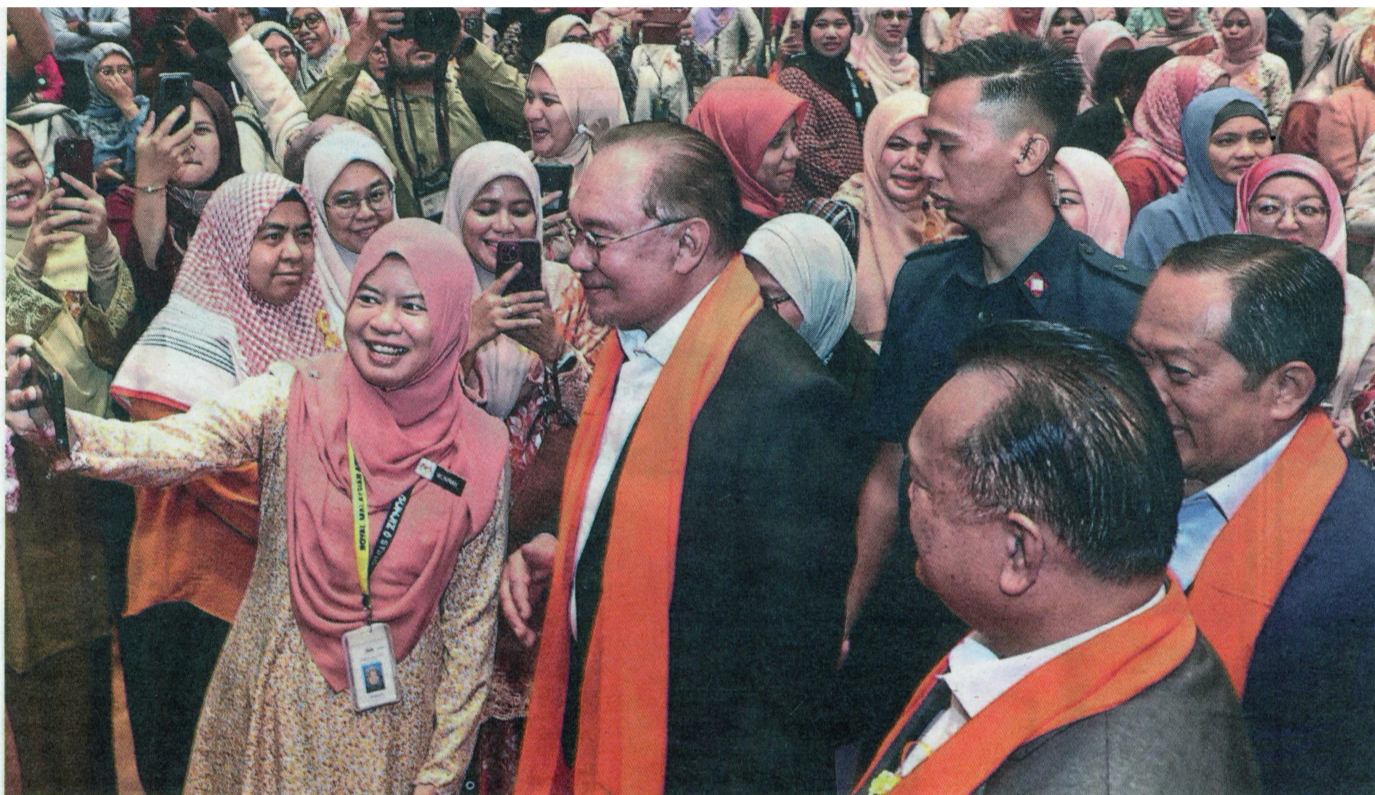


Putting an end to delays



All smiles: Anwar posing for a photo with the Works Ministry staff after attending the monthly assembly at Dewan Tan Sri Mahfoz Khalid. - AZMAN GHANI / The Star

Ensure infrastructure projects finished on time, ministry told

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KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim wants the Works Ministry to get tough against contractors who delay infrastructure projects to ensure that these projects are completed on schedule.

He said that this is crucial as the ministry is responsible for numerous development projects that involve the people's interests.

Anwar said the ministry must monitor projects from the beginning, including those managed by the state governments, to ensure that they are completed on time.

"What the ministry must do is to list all the projects and record their progress.

"If contractors remain lackadaisical and slow, we must take a

firmer stance against them. And if there are delays, do not wait for me to step in," he said in his speech at the Works Ministry's monthly assembly here yesterday.

Anwar, who is also Finance Minister, said the ministry's officers must continuously monitor the implementation of projects and go down to the ground to inspect the situation.

"Often, the officers on the ground have a better understanding of what is needed.

"For example, when we plan a school project, when they go down to the ground, they see that the roads are terrible and find something was not included in the original plans.

"So, give junior officers the room to submit their views, even if they fall outside the existing

processes and procedures. We will consider them. By doing this, we work as one team," he added.

On his recent visit to Sabah, Anwar said he understood the sentiments of the people there who felt neglected because public projects had taken a long time to be completed.

"As a human being, I understand why people are angry. We hear it all the time: ministers keep changing, governments keep changing, prime ministers keep changing. But the water supply situation hasn't changed, the electricity situation has not changed. The roads are still full of potholes.

"Even though we have approved the largest financial allocation in history for overall development and operations in Sabah, the work is still not finished.

"So I understand why they still feel neglected after so long," he added.

Anwar said the government will monitor the implementation programmes in Sabah, adding that monthly meetings will be held in Kota Kinabalu to track the progress of the projects.

On a separate matter, the Prime Minister expressed concern over the growing trend of glorifying bribe givers.

"We now have a trend of idolising and glorifying bribe givers. This is worrying as it will impede the country's efforts to advance," he said.