

PM: They dropped the ball on welfare

Past leaders failed to tackle problems on housing, rice prices

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KUALA SELANGOR: Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has called out previous administrations for their sluggish progress on public welfare projects.

The Prime Minister said initiatives such as affordable housing for lower-income groups and the regulation of rice prices remained at a standstill despite multiple ministerial changes.

"How many ministers have changed again and again, yet the issue remains stagnant?" he said in his speech at the groundbreaking ceremony of the Residensi Rakyat Programme (PRR) in Bestari Jaya here yesterday.

Anwar said the issue of padi farmers was raised in Parliament this week, with concerns over disparities in productivity between states.

While Selangor has seen high productivity, he said many farmers in Kedah and Kelantan contin-

ue to struggle with poverty, often directing their frustrations at the government.

"But during their 33 months in power, what did they do? Not even RM1 was increased. In 2023, we raised it (and) in 2024 we raised it again.

"Just a few days ago, Agriculture Minister Datuk Seri Mohamad Sabu increased it further, from RM1,200 to RM1,500," he said.

He stated cooperation remains key in addressing these issues, and questions have been raised about why similar efforts were not undertaken by previous leaders when they were in power.

"The price of goods, housing, schools, hospitals, clinics - these are our problems. When I took office as Prime Minister, I immediately pushed for urgent road repairs."

Commenting on the PRR project, Anwar said it will serve as a model for future housing initiatives in estate areas, where plantation companies provide land



Home ownership within reach: Anwar (third from right) and Nga (second from left), with Berjaya Corporation Bhd founder Tan Sri Vincent Tan (third from left), looking at a mock-up model at the groundbreaking ceremony for the PRR Harmoni Madani Bestari Jaya. - RAJA FAISAL HISHAN/The Star

while the government formulates better development plans for estate communities.

"I want to make the PRR Madani Bestari Jaya a model for other estates to adopt.

"For decades, the disputes here (in Bestari Jaya) stalled progress, but I must thank (Housing and Local Government Minister) Nga Kor Ming for his immediate action in resolving the matter upon taking office."

He said without the private sector's involvement, affordable housing projects for lower-income groups, including estate workers, would face significant cost barriers.

Anwar also stressed the need for efficient land use and urban planning to ensure better housing conditions.

"In the past, the Bandar Tun Razak and Seri Perlis housing

areas were suitable, but after 50 years, they no longer meet modern living standards.

"That is why we must continue implementing projects like these, ensuring seamless collaboration among stakeholders," he said.

The groundbreaking ceremony for the PRR Harmoni Madani Bestari Jaya marks a collaborative effort between the Federal Government, the Selangor state government, Perbadanan PR1MA Malaysia and Berjaya Corporation Berhad.

Nga said the project was expected to be completed by the first quarter of 2027.

"I hope we can celebrate Deepavali 2027 in these new homes.

"This project will feature various facilities, including a community park, jogging track, surau and kindergarten.

"This reflects the ministry's commitment to ensuring the people's well-being under the leadership of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

"Housing is a fundamental right and essential need," he said in his speech.

The initiative will benefit workers from five estates: Ladang Mary, Ladang Nigel Gardner, Ladang Bukit Tagar, Ladang Sungai Tinggi and Ladang Minyak.

The housing project will consist of 245 single-storey terrace houses, each covering 750 sq ft, and is expected to be completed within 24 months, subject to the necessary development approvals.

Each unit, estimated to cost RM300,000, will be sold at an affordable price of RM45,000, with the government subsidising approximately RM58.8mil for the overall project.