

# A lesson for housing developers

## New projects should incorporate preschools and schools, says PM

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** The developer and contractor of a housing project were caught by surprise when Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim called them out during a ground-breaking ceremony and asked if a school was part of the plan.

The developer of Residensi Aman Madani in Bandar Tasik Permaisuri, Danau Lumayan Sdn Bhd, and its turnkey contractor Pesona Metro Holdings Bhd were taken aback by the turn of events.

The Prime Minister had stopped short midway into his speech and asked them if the housing project had preschools and a school in its vicinity.

Anwar said parents should not have to travel far to send their children to school.

"We should not build houses without schools nearby. Projects should be monitored directly to ensure this concept is adhered to. If we want to be responsible leaders, we must act on the people's complaints," he said.

"We must uphold integrity. Do not approve projects slowly just because we claim to be 'clean'. Being clean also means being efficient. Corruption and commissions must be eradicated," the Prime Minister added.

He said if there are no existing schools nearby, then there must be dedicated vertical schools (for the community).

"Next Monday, the developers, contractors, the Federal Territories Minister and project planners must brief me on where the schools and preschools are located.

"We need both primary and secondary schools. If there are no schools nearby, at least one block in the area must be allocated for



**Eyes on the future:** Anwar at the ground-breaking ceremony of Residensi Wilayah Aman Lumayan. With him is Dr Zaliha (fourth from left). — LOW BOON TAT/The Star

educational purposes.

"A second block should be reserved until all conditions are met.

"If we want vertical schools, we must ensure proper facilities and planning," said Anwar.

The Prime Minister also noted that many urban parents earn between RM2,000 and RM3,000 a month.

"I've instructed that kindergartens be located within buildings.

"If not, this needs to be corrected by the city planners.

"The goal is to allow parents to work peacefully, knowing their children are safe nearby," he said.

Anwar also said he appreciated the city's efforts to build more stalls for small traders, as about 85% of residents buy from these small stalls.

"We shouldn't neglect them while building tall luxury towers.

"Let's not only beautify the city but also support everyday livelihoods," he added.

Residensi Aman Madani will provide 3,500 housing units, with each unit measuring 900sq ft in size and priced at RM300,000.

The affordable housing project, with a gross development value of approximately RM1.01bil, will be known as Residensi Wilayah

Aman Lumayan.

The project, which comprises three phases, will be fully completed within five years.

Also present at the event were Dr Zaliha Mustafa, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department and Bandar Tun Razak MP Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, who is also the Prime Minister's wife.

Dr Zaliha said unchecked urbanisation could lead to the "hollowing out" of city centres where low-income residents are systematically pushed out due to market pressure, eroding the city's social character.

**"The goal is to allow parents to work peacefully, knowing their children are safe nearby."**

Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim

"Kuala Lumpur, with nearly two million people in an area of only 240sq km, has a density of over 8,100 people per square kilometre.

"Behind this rising number lies a growing spatial gap between the city centre and its residents.

"This spatial inequality forces key city workers – public servants, technicians, nurses, small traders and others – to live far from their workplaces, commuting two to three hours daily.

"This affects the cost of living, productivity and their family well-being," she said.

Dr Zaliha also said that with urban housing units being increasingly unaffordable to the middle and lower-income groups, there will be a lack of fair wealth distribution.

"Kuala Lumpur should no longer be a city exclusive to the affluent.

"In our push for affordable housing, I've stressed to the Federal Territories Department and Kuala Lumpur City Council (DBKL) that all projects must meet quality standards, ensure access to utilities, healthcare and education, and include well-designed public spaces," she added.