

Fair compensation for  
property acquisition

**Kg Baru**

**folk get**

**PM's**

**assurance**

14 JAN 1992

By K.H. Lim and  
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KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today assured Kampung Baru residents that the Government will give them fair compensation for properties acquired under the urban renewal project.

"We will certainly not rob the people of their property. We will surely pay those who are entitled to compensation as far as we can afford it," he said.

Dr Mahathir, who is also Umno president, was speaking to reporters after chairing a three-hour Umno supreme council meeting at the Putra World Trade Centre here.

The Government had not set aside any allocation for compensation to Kampung Baru residents yet as survey work was still going on.

Asked to comment on the progress, he said the Gov-

ernment was now only surveying the area to be redeveloped under the project.

In a related development, Director-General of the Valuation and Property Services Department, Datuk Muhammad Nawawi Mohd Arshad, said Kampung Baru property owners could have their own valuation done on the properties to make sure that they got fair compensation from the Government. (See Page 14)

Dr Mahathir, however, cautioned against high expectations by property owners of a windfall in compensation.

"If we don't have enough money, we will not achieve any progress (for the area) and this project may even be abandoned.

"The project is to redevelop Kampung Baru. If we don't have enough money, there will not be a Kampung Baru yang baru (a new new village) but it will remain a Kampung Baru yang lama

(an old new village).

"It should be borne in mind that if the cost is too high, we may not be able to place the Malays in this kampung.

"They will not be able to afford to live or work there due to the excessively high costs.

"With a reasonable cost (of land acquisition), once we build shops and houses, Malays will be able to afford to buy or rent the properties.

"If not, once we build the shops and houses, Malays themselves will not be able to afford it, so the project will fail."

Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, Datuk Suleiman Mohamed, had on Friday stated that \$400 million was allocated for compensation. He clarified on Saturday that the rate of compensation

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had not been finalised as survey work had only begun three days earlier.

There are 646 registered land owners in Kampung Baru whose land has been gazetted for re-development under the project.

Asked to comment on overcrowding in prisons, the Prime Minister said one of the reasons was that trials normally took a long time and the accused persons would be on remand.

"One way of reducing this congestion is to reduce the jail term. But to do so, we have to make sure the punishment remains effective.

"So what is the alternative to a jail term?"

"I find that lawyers also agree that maybe suspended sentences or other ways can be used.

"We also feel that the convicts had committed crimes against society. Yet society is paying for then food and board.

"It does not seem that the person is punished but rather it is society that is punished.

"To the Government, it looks as if the situation is reversed where we punish society instead of the criminal.

"In the past, there used to be sentences to hard labour where the convict had to do heavy work.

"Now, he is fully supported by society. I see this as not being proper. By right, he should pay for his own keep.

"We are now studying this and we want to know the views of the public.

"If the public want us to spend money to upkeep these convicts, then the money will not be spent on other social development projects."

On a call by Umno Youth that the Government stop using the services of legal firms which were involved in anti-Government activities, he said it would be con-

sidered, but the proposal had not been submitted to the Government officially.

"While we don't want to force legal firms to support the Government, it is not necessary for us to support firms which do not support the Government."

On a call by the Bar Council for Malaysians not to engage in "lawyer-bashing", he said the Government was not "lawyer-bashing".

On the other hand, he said, it was the Bar Council which went "Government-bashing".

He said the Bar Council not only wanted to try the Lord President for contempt of court but they tried to remove the Lord President by committing him to prison.

"In an indirect way, the Bar Council is trying to remove the Lord President by unconstitutional means. There is no use denying this because it is true and we have everything."

He said he had the state-

ments to show that the Bar Council was trying to do this.

He said the Bar Council should not go "Government-bashing" if it did not want to see "lawyer-bashing". "We should not bash each other."

On a call that the Internal Security Act (ISA) be used to curb such activities by individuals or groups which had marred Malaysia's image abroad, he said the situation did not warrant the use of the ISA yet.

"The ISA is only for situations where the security of the country is threatened. We have not reached that stage yet.

"Those who speak ill of the country overseas are only showing they have no love for the country."

On the proposal for a fourth television channel, he said the Cabinet had not discussed the proposal yet.

"All that we know is the statements being made in the Press."

may be the answer