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PM's Putrajaya residence costs RM17.5m to build

THE latest figure in the cost of constructing the Prime Minister's official residence in Putrajaya stands at RM17.5mil, said Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Fauzi Abdul Rahman.

He said the RM51.7mil sought for under the Development Fund for the security system and IT cables had nothing to do with the residence.

The allocation would cover expenses of the entire complex's security system, including meeting rooms, press area, waiting room and VIP lounges, he said.

Fauzi was replying to points raised by MPs when debating the motion to seek another RM2.67bil from the Development Fund for various projects.

To another point, he chided Wan Mohd Jamin Wan Mahmood (PAS - Tumpat) for giving a "low class" suggestion that the Government's efforts in providing housing for the Armed Forces personnel was to "fish for votes."

"We have always been committed to providing

housing for the Armed Forces," he said.

Debating allocations under the Housing and Local Government ministry, several MPs questioned the rationale of buying two helicopters costing nearly RM60mil for search and rescue work when the country was facing economic problems.

Dr Maximus Ongkili (PBS - Bandau) said apart from the money to buy the helicopters, more money would be needed for maintenance.

"Isn't it better to rent the helicopters?" he asked.

Two other MPs, Yeong Chee Wah (BN - Batu Gajah) and Husni Hanadzlah (BN - Tambun) lamented that funds allocated to set up a fire station in Jelapang, Perak, was "hijacked" for another station elsewhere.

In reply, Deputy Minister Datuk Peter Chin assured the House that the Government would continue with its intention to set up the Jelapang fire station.