

27 APR 2001

Hall-Renovation

RENOVATION TO MALAYSIA HALL BEGINS

By: Zaharah Othman

LONDON, April 27 (Bernama) -- Malaysia Hall has been closed temporarily to allow renovation work and repairs to be carried out in view of the impending end of lease this September.

Plans are currently being made to replace the much-loved canteen with a cafeteria and regulars will now have to find alternative places to perform their Friday prayers as the Hall no longer provides such a service.

Last Friday (April 20) marked the last day Malaysia Hall opened its doors for Friday prayers.

The temporary closure of buildings number 46 and 47, which is known as Malaysia Hall, started five days ago in the first phase of a major repair work which is expected to take four or five months.

Major work will be done on buildings 44 & 45 which housed the canteen and offices, before they are handed back to the leaseholder.

"The canteen will still continue to serve its customers until the end of July. The cafeteria, when in operation, hopefully in October, will not sell food which are cooked on the premises as there are no facilities for cooking," said Dr Kamarudin Mohamed Nor, director of the Malaysian Students Department.

"Minor cooking, such as the heating of roti canai can be done," he said.

The cafeteria will be in the Great Hall, which has seen the gatherings of Malaysian students and community in Britain during the visits of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and other leaders.

A divider will be in place to ensure that the Hall, when in used, will be separated from the cafeteria.

Dr Kamarudin said it had been decided that in view of the expiry of the lease to the buildings, the process to vacate the place should be carried out earlier. These premises will be vacated by Aug 1.

"Since the temporary closure on April 21 (of building 46 & 47), the department has carried out checks on inventories and for damages to the building. Contractors will be invited to give their quotations starting from May," he said.

The first phase of the renovation will start with the repair of the prayer room which has seen the Sultan of Brunei among its congregation during His Majesty's visits to London. The new prayer room will, however, be smaller.

Starting today, April 27, Friday prayers will be held at the nearby Seymour Leisure Centre, as organised by Al-Huda, a Muslim society which has several Malaysian Muslims as its members.

-- BERNAMA

ZO AHH RM