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RM1.5b for armed forces housing

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A SUM of RM1.5 billion has been allocated for armed forces housing under the Eighth Malaysia Plan.

Prime Minister's Department Parliamentary Secretary Datuk Noh Omar said from this amount, RM400 million would be used to build 6,963 housing units in seven locations in the Klang Valley.

Noh said work at the seven locations started on Jan 3. RM400 million was needed now to build these houses immediately. "The nine MPs that debated on this topic have misunderstood this allocation," he said when winding up to points raised during the committee stage debate of the Supplementary Supply (2000 and 2001) Bill 2001.

"Construction is expected to begin in July or October and the houses are expected to be ready by 2003."

These houses will be built in Kementah Camp, Pasifik Camp, Wardieburn Camp, Jalan U Thant, Sungai Besi Camp, TUDM Subang and Jalan Cochrane.

The facilities will include kindergartens, libraries, recreational parks and courts for games.

Noh said the department chose the seven areas first as it wanted to overcome the armed forces housing shortage in the Klang Valley.

Housing units in the other States would be discussed in the Eighth Malaysia Plan to be tabled by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on Monday.

Dr Maximus Johnity Ongkili (PBS-Bandau) and Dr Sarit Yusoh (BN-Temerloh) had raised the issue of the Bumiputera Entrepreneurs in the Retail Sector Project (Prosper) during the debate earlier.

In response, Noh said until April 13, 23 applications for the project was approved for loans totalling RM2,020,165. The projects were worth RM8,002,550.

This is out of 91 applicants that handed in their proposals. (A total of 9,062 applications were received. From this, 3,222 took personality tests and 1,535 attended workshops) "This project is the result of the Bumiputera Entrepreneurs Congress held last year," Noh said.

The resolutions of the congress had outlined several problems.

These include Bumiputeras' lack of capital to start a business, their failure to find strategic places, lack of financial aid available to them and their small participation in the retail sector ( only 10 per cent).

"The Government decided to place the project under the Prime Minister's Department so that it can work with Perbadanan Usahawan Nasional Berhad (PUNB) and give the Bumiputera entrepreneurs more aid," Noh added.

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