

Build 100-storey tower in Kg Baru: Umno leader
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A delegate today called on Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak to build his proposed 100-storey Menara Warisan tower in Kampung Baru in Kuala Lumpur because it would be hugely symbolic to the Malay community.

"This is in order for the building to become a symbol of Malay success on Malay land," Federal Territories Umno delegate Johari Abdul Ghani said when debating the motion on the economy at the Umno general assembly today.

Johari said building Menara Warisan in Kampung Baru would also enhance real estate prices in the largely undeveloped Malay enclave.

Citing the example of KLCC, he said that the surrounding areas of the monumental site that also houses the Twin Towers had greatly appreciated in value.

"(If Menara Warisan is in Kampung Baru), I'm sure that in the decades to come, the surroundings will become priceless to the Malays," he said.

Along with the fact that Kampung Baru's 230 acres of land is largely undeveloped, Johari said said: "I want to ask (the president): What is wrong with having the 100-storey Menara Warisan erected in the middle of Malay land in Kampung Baru?"

"PNB has 22 acres. In Kampung Baru we have 230 acres. I believe that the Malays will fully agree if the president brings the 100-storey tower to Kampung Baru," Johari said.

Kampung Baru is the biggest Malay enclave in the heart of Kuala Lumpur where many traditional houses still exist. It is also an important political and cultural symbol for the Malay community.

The tower, to be built adjacent to Stadium Merdeka and Stadium Negara at the city centre, was announced during Najib's Budget 2011 speech.

Najib said that the project would be undertaken by Permodalan Nasional Bhd (BHD), a government-linked company, at a cost of RM5 billion.

The announcement had attracted heavy criticism from opposition parties who claimed that the move was a waste of public funds and a throwback to former Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad's era of mega-infrastructure projects.

Malays will benefit

Meanwhile, Works Minister Shaziman Mansor conceded that the Malay community may not directly benefit from the construction of the building.

"On one hand we will see direct effects. On the other hand, it can be a symbol. Maybe from a direct aspect, we will not see effects, but this is not a big deal.

"The building can be used as an office, trade centre and it also proves that Malays can succeed," said Shaziman when met at the sidelines of the assembly.

Shaziman said that the building will not be funded by bond or shareholder money but from PNB's profits.

"This should be the pride of Malaysians because an institution of this size, that has profits that big, is capable of undertaking this task," he said.

Additional reporting by Regina Lee.

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