

'FINAL OFFER TO BE MADE BY PM'

Report on outcome of town hall session with stakeholders will be sent to Dr M, say Khalid

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THE final say on the government offer for the land deal in Kampung Baru will be made by the prime minister.

Federal Territories Minister Khalid Samad said this after his offer to buy out the landowners at the rate of RM850 per sq ft was rejected by them.

He said he would send a detailed report to Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad soon on the outcome of the ministry's town hall session with the stakeholders, where the government had been urged to revise its offer.

Khalid said Dr Mahathir would reply within a month.

He did not discount the possibility that he would get back to the landowners with a higher offer following recommendations by Dr Mahathir.

"I have given them a fair offer, but we will take into account what they are asking.

"I will report to PM that everyone has agreed to the proposal, but what's standing in the way is the (proposed) value rate," Khalid said after the town hall session at Dewan Perdana Felda here yesterday.

He added that there was a possibility the matter would be taken to cabinet.

Khalid said the landowners might be offered a little bit more, but ultimately the rates would correspond with the Valuation and Property Services Department (JPPH) value of RM650 to RM850 psf.

He urged landowners to be reasonable and agree to the deal if he returned with a higher offer.

Khalid reminded them that they were beneficiaries of prime land that were sold to them at low rates.

"We have to take into account that the buyout has to allow the project to proceed.

"We don't want to spend RM6 to RM10 billion and make nothing," he said, projecting that the government could make five per cent profit from the overall redevelopment.

"If we buy at a high rate, we will also have to sell at higher rates.

"But at the same time, we want the homes and commercial prop-

erties here to go back to the Malay community."

He said the ministry would try to accommodate landowners who did not want to sell by having development take place around them or relocating them to the Malay Heritage Park (Taman Warisan Melayu), part of the redevelopment initiatives to preserve heritage homes in the area.

Khalid said the government would not use legal means to force those who were unwilling to sell their land.

He added that the land was retained as a Malay reserve by the government, despite its sky-high prospects.

He urged landowners to seize the opportunity as by leaving their assets landlocked, they would not be able to capture the value of their properties.

He said the land might be worth more on paper, but leaving their land idle would only depreciate it in future.

"This will become a burden not only for you, but also for investors and the government which want to redevelop it."

He said the government offered landowners a flat rate as the proposed redevelopment would change the landscape of the enclave.

As a result, he added that regular land valuation criteria did