

Kg Baru may end up being sidelined, says Dr M

KUALA LUMPUR: Kampung Baru will end up being sidelined from modern progress that is taking place in surrounding areas of the Malay enclave here if it continues to oppose redevelopment, said Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

He said the 120-year-old enclave needed to embrace change or it would continue to exist in contradiction with its modern surroundings.

“The disorganised conditions in Kampung Baru make it an uncomfortable place. To address this problem, it needs to be overhauled.

“As it is now, even Malays do not want to live in Kampung Baru. What is more unfortunate is that foreigners had begun moving in to stay and do business there.”

Dr Mahathir said this in a pre-recorded speech during the town hall session with Kampung Baru handowners at Dewan Perdana Felda here yesterday.

He took a dig at dissenting stakeholders for opposing redevelopment of the enclave.

“Unfortunately, despite centuries passing by, Kampung Baru has remained the same.”

Dr Mahathir said among the reasons the Kampung Baru master plan was objected to was the claim that redevelopment would drive Malays out from the city centre.

“This is unfounded and not true. The interests and position of Malays are the core of the development of Kampung Baru.”

Dr Mahathir said this was provided for in the Kampung Baru Development Act, which stated that the interests of the Malays, including their social, economical, heritage, customs, culture and historical position, would

be given priority in developments that were to be carried out.

Dr Mahathir said Kampung Baru would be better off if it was properly planned and redeveloped with infrastructure and a network of green spaces provided for recreational and community activities.

This, Dr Mahathir said, would be able to draw more Malays to live in the enclave as well as increase the value of its property.

He gave an assurance that all development in Kampung Baru would follow guidelines on Malay and Islamic architecture.

“This means the development of Kampung Baru will take into consideration its heritage and historical aspects as the symbol of Malay pride in the heart of the city.”

Dr Mahathir said the redevelopment of the enclave would provide opportunities for Malays to engage in commercial and business activities in the city.

Previous reports had said that the proposed Kampung Baru redevelopment would be on a par with buildings located within Kuala Lumpur City Centre, with offices, premium retail space, luxury hotels and apartments, and convention facilities.

Kampung Baru consists of seven villages that formed a “Malay Agriculture Settlement” in the 89ha area and comprises Kampung Periok, Kampung Hujung Pasir, Kampung Masjid, Kampung Paya, Kampung Atas A, Kampung B and Kampung Pindah.

Heritage buildings in the area include Sultan Suleiman Club, Masjid Jamek Kampung Baru, Masjid Pakistan and Gurdwara Tatt Khalsa.

The proposed redevelopment will encompass part of the Chow Kit area and PKNS flats.