

AFTERMATH OF FIRE

'REBUILDING OF PROPERTIES TO TAKE A YEAR'

Govt, Petronas and Selangor will undertake the task, says PM while pledging cash aid

SUBANG JAYA

THE federal government and national energy company Petronas, with the help of the Selangor government, will repair and rebuild properties damaged by yesterday's gas pipeline blaze in Putra Heights.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim announced this after visiting the site of the blaze.

"The responsibility of restoring

this residential area, repairing or replacing (damaged properties), will be fully undertaken by us — the federal government and Petronas, in cooperation with the state government.

"There is no need to worry, it will just take a bit of time," he said at the site.

Anwar said rebuilding the area and affected properties may take around a year.

"It's not like a flood that sometimes takes a week or two (before people can return home)."

Anwar said the entire government machinery, including the Housing and Local Government Ministry, will meet to submit proposals on the way forward after discussions with residents' groups.

In the meantime, the government will provide RM5,000 to those whose homes were de-



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim visiting the site of the blaze in Putra Heights yesterday, PIC COURTESY OF PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

stroyed, and those whose houses were damaged will receive RM2,500. Anwar said if needed, the government and Petronas would look at the need to increase the aid.

The fire was reportedly accompanied by several explosions that shook the ground. The flames also caused fires at several houses as the pipeline was located near

residential areas.

The fire broke out at a Petronas gas pipeline in Putra Heights, causing widespread panic as huge flames shot up into the air.

The heat from the flames — seen kilometres away from the burning site — was said to have melted plastic and rubber objects within a wide radius of the pipeline.

A total of 145 people were injured and are receiving treatment in several hospitals.

In terms of property damage, 227 houses were affected, 78 of which were razed to the ground.

Meanwhile, 365 vehicles were damaged, including 275 cars and 56 motorcycles.

Firefighters extinguished the fire at the source at 3.45pm.