

# PM: Bill targets urban decay

## Public assured that proposed legislation will not 'sideline' or 'oppress' Malays

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The Urban Renewal Bill is not intended to undermine Malay rights, rather, it aims to address deteriorating living conditions in urban areas, says Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

The Prime Minister said while the government is open to suggestions to improve the legislation, it must move forward.

"If adjustments are needed, I'm open to them. I'm not saying the proposed legislation is perfect. But let's not make it seem like we are trying to sideline the Malays or oppress them. That's not true.

"I feel one of my duties is to save the Malays in urban areas. I don't want to see Malays living in deplorable conditions," he said in reply to a supplementary question from Datuk Seri Hamzah Zainudin (PN-Larut) during the Minister's Question Time, who asked if the government was pre-

pared to delay the Bill to gather more feedback from all quarters.

"Don't assume this is a Chinese strategy to seize Malay rights. I don't agree with that.

"I'm not a puppet. I'm here because I've been given a mandate. I must defend the interests of the Malays and bumiputra, and their basic rights," he added.

Anwar appealed for space to allow the government to build better, more comfortable homes to meet the current needs of the majority, who are mostly Malays.

The Bill, he explained, provides the legal framework for the government to redevelop ageing urban housing areas, with the guarantee that residents will be given significantly improved homes.

"The Bill will give the government the space to build more comfortable homes that suit the

times. In many cases, the majority of residents (of the rundown housing) are Malays.

"The Bill proposes that those who own one-bedroom units will receive new homes with a minimum of three bedrooms," he said in response to Datuk Ahmad Amzad Mohamed (PN-Kuala Terengganu), who raised concerns that the Bill might allow homes to be forcibly demolished and redeveloped after just 30 years.

The Prime Minister also hit out at certain quarters for attempting to racialise the Bill, accusing them of spreading false narratives that it is designed to alter the Malay-majority demographics in urban areas.

"I want to ask, since we took over the government, even with DAP in the coalition, which Malay-majority area have we handed over (to non-Malays)? Don't

accuse us of sidelining or oppressing Malays," he said.

Anwar said that instead of making baseless claims, critics, including the opposition, should table constructive recommendations to strengthen the proposed legislation.

The Prime Minister also told the House that the government has achieved 98.8% of the 500,000 affordable housing units target set under the 12th Malaysia Plan (12MP).

"In 12MP, the target was high, but the implementation was weak. That is why it was given priority under the supervision of the Housing and Local Government Ministry. With the cooperation of the state government, the remaining target of 6,126 units will be completed," he said.

On the Housing Credit Guar-

antee Scheme, the Prime Minister said that starting 2023, the government channelled guarantees worth RM20bil involving 88,507 applications.

"This shows that without government assistance and guarantees, buyers, especially the M40 and B40 groups, find it difficult to buy a house.

"Some think the existing loans are still insufficient because the house needs to be repaired or have to bear the cost of moving," he said.

In this regard, Anwar said the scheme now offers loans of up to 120% to help buyers cover other expenses including moving and purchasing furniture.