

HELPING CITY'S POOR

PM: URBAN RENEWAL MEANT TO AID MALAYS

'Proposed law will not put Malay reserve land at risk'

FUAD NIZAM
AND MOHAMAD ALAS
KUALA LUMPUR
news@nst.com.my

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has told critics of the proposed Urban Renewal Act not to disrupt the government's efforts to support the poor, especially the urban Malay community.

Speaking at the launch of the Wakaf Mara Madani endowment fund here yesterday, he said the act, designed to aid the urban poor, would not jeopardise Malay land reserves.

"Some may claim that Malay reserve land is at risk," he said.

"This view is misleading and a betrayal.

"Malay reserve land remains Malay reserve land. The strata ti-

tle does not change.

"We intend to use this law so that Malays in urban areas, such as Kuala Lumpur, can continue to live in these areas."

Anwar accused those opposing urban renewal projects as obstructing progress without providing solutions.

"Some oppose it, even calling for a gathering. I want to tell them — do not challenge us.

"We can hold a stadium-sized rally to defend policies that protect the Malays.

"What have they ever proposed to help the Malays? Nothing. Many efforts have been made to uplift the poor Malays, but nothing from them," he added.

The proposed Urban Renewal Act aims to facilitate redevelopment by setting a new approval threshold for residents.

Currently, unanimous agreement from all property owners is

required for redevelopment to proceed.

Under the new law, only 80 per cent agreement will be needed for properties fewer than 30 years

old, 75 per cent for those older than 30 years, and a simple majority of 51 per cent will be sufficient for abandoned or derelict properties.

The law is not only intended to replace homes for the urban poor, but also to introduce new facilities and infrastructure that benefit communities.

Economist Professor Emeritus Dr Barjoyai Bardai said homeowners in redeveloped areas — regardless of race or background — would receive new homes at no cost.

"This redevelopment will also provide opportunities for new amenities, such as community halls, police stations and public transport links like an MRT station, which will increase conve-



Professor Emeritus
Dr Barjoyai Bardai



The proposed Urban Renewal Act aims to facilitate redevelopment in cities, like Kuala Lumpur, by setting new residents' approval thresholds. NSTP PIC BY AIZUDDIN SAAD

nience and significantly boost property values."

He believed the bill could uplift the urban poor, particularly in areas with ageing infrastructure.

"While the improvements in drainage, waste management and green spaces may not be immediately visible, they will enhance the living conditions for city residents.

"Moreover, redevelopment opens up economic opportunities, providing the urban poor with jobs and business opportunities," he said.

However, Barjoyai said the redevelopment threshold for landed properties needed to be clarified, as they might have individual land titles, unlike stratified properties such as flats

and apartments.

He said clearer guidelines were needed to ensure consistency across property types.

On March 15, Anwar reiterated his commitment to the urban renewal initiative, defending it against critics who, he said, preferred to see urban Malays remain in poverty rather than embrace the benefits of redevelopment.

He also vowed to hold counter protests against those opposing urban redevelopment efforts.

The bill is seen as a significant step in improving infrastructure and services for marginalised communities, besides promoting economic and social development for the urban poor, especially the Malays.