

No MRT land return guarantee shows bad faith, says DAP
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KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 7 — DAP has accused Putrajaya of bad faith for not guaranteeing the return of land acquired for the Klang Valley Mass Rapid Transit (KVMRT) project even while admitting that the wholesale acquisition was done for the sake of convenience.

DAP publicity chief Tony Pua said expediency was no reason to abuse the law and jeopardise landowners' rights, particularly since the National Land Code 1965 had been amended in 1990 to allow underground land to be acquired without affecting surface property.

The "convoluted" explanation from the Land Public Transport Commission (SPAD) yesterday justifying the government's decision to acquire land in toto in spite of these existing legal provisions showed that acquisition was little more than a land grab, he alleged.

"All the various untenable excuses being raised leads only to a single possible conclusion — the land acquisition exercises proposed in Chinatown, Bukit Bintang and other prime locations are nothing but poorly masked attempts at profiteering and land grab," Pua said in a statement today.

"They are in breach of the spirit of the Land Acquisition Act 1960 where the government is only to acquire private land, and only that which is necessary for public use and benefit, and not for profit."

Prasarana presenting their ideas on the MRT to Jalan Sultan trader, lot owners and residents Aug 11, 2011. — Picture by Jack Ooi

He added that SPAD should "stop tunnelling a deeper hole" for itself by trying to legitimise the government's excessive land acquisition and urged the commission to stick to its role of independently regulating and ensuring efficient and effective public transport.

"It should not become a partner-in-crime for the government to justify its 'land grab' exercises, which is completely irrelevant to the planning and design of the MRT system," he said.

SPAD chief executive Mohd Nur Kamal said in a letter to The Malaysian Insider yesterday that affected landowners can apply for stratum titles from the government after acquisition but added there was no guarantee Putrajaya would re-alienate surface land back to the original owners.

He also denied accusations leveled by critics who claim the land acquisition exercise on Jalan Sultan in the heart of the capital was just a cover for a land grab.

SPAD had reportedly told traders there whose land will be acquired that they could hold on to their property at a meeting on August 23 brokered by MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Chua Soi Lek.

The commission had earlier insisted it would have to demolish buildings within the corridor of the station and tunnel prior to construction to ensure public safety given their age and

uncertain soil conditions.

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