

**Putrajaya says 'good faith' shown despite lack of MRT land guarantee**  
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**By Shazwan Mustafa Kamal**

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 8 — The government today insisted that it had shown "good faith", contrary to opposition accusation, by agreeing to meet and negotiate with Jalan Sultan traders.

The traders' lots are under risk of being forced-acquisitioned for the Klang Valley Mass Rapid Transit (KVMRT) project. The government has refused to guarantee the return the land to traders once the project is completed, which the opposition says is insincere.

Land Public Transport Commission (SPAD) chairman Tan Sri Syed Hamid Albar brushed off the accusations today, and maintained that the government had shown "good faith" by agreeing to discuss and meet with affected Jalan Sultan traders.

"(Although) we cannot give our guarantee, we have shown our good faith in negotiating with them and looking into that possibility," he said.

"I think we have been fair, looked into all sides, after we have acquired there is a next process . A process of application, legal process...stratum titles. It's good we never give empty promises. But we have made possibility for engagement, we are very sincere about this," Syed Hamid (picture) told reporters here.

SPAD chief executive Mohd Nur Kamal said in a letter to The Malaysian Insider recently 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.

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.

Elaborating further, Syed Hamid said that the MRT project will benefit Jalan Sultan traders and enhance property value of the area- and that the project would be a "catalyst" for urban development where it had the potential to generate better employment opportunities and overall quality of life.

"Let us look at the developmental aspect. Urban railway development is a catalyst for development.

"It's not only one side which gets benefit, (there will be) enhancement of value of property in that area, people's ability to work and get employment..their standard of living is improved, quality of life is better," he said.

The SPAD boss denied accusations levelled 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.

"There is no such thing as wanting to grab land or to be interested to acquire land so that we can enrich anybody..nonsense. People are trying to divert attention.

"Do we need good public transport? Yes. Even in Jalan Sultan, when I met them they said they are for MRT," he added.

The former Home Minister stressed that the land acquisition was done with the view that the "public gets the best land transport system."

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