

**Kampung Puah Won't Lose Identity Despite Plans To Develop The Area: Najib Bernama**  
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KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 20 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak has assured Kampung Puah residents here that the identity of their village will remain despite the move to develop the area.

The prime minister said he had instructed Federal Territories and Urban Well-being Minister Datuk Raja Nong Chik Raja Zainal Abidin to discuss with the developer, Aamin Development Sdn Bhd, on the need to consider the wishes of the residents when drawing the development plan for the area.

"I understand the feelings of the people here who want to live in a traditional village environment in the midst of the city. I also understand that this can potentially become a tourist attraction.

"In short, I've asked Datuk Raja Nong Chik and Kuala Lumpur Mayor (Tan Sri Ahmad Fuad Ismail) together with the Public-Private Partnership unit to discuss with the developer to allocate part of the land for the Kampung Puah community," he said to a loud applause from those present, who responded by shouting, "Hidup Najib!" (Long Live Najib).

Present at the event, held at the village's Cultural Hall in conjunction with the prime minister's get-to-the-ground visit to three parliamentary areas in the national capital, were MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Chua Soi Lek, Deputy Federal Territories and Urban Well-being Minister Datuk M. Saravanan and Wangsa Maju member of parliament Wee Choo Keong.

The Economic Planning Unit had on Aug 13, 2001 submitted a letter to the Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) to inform of an in-principle approval for the development of a 13-hectare site in the area, by way of privatisation, between DBKL and Aamin Development.

Apart from Kampung Puah Lembah, other villages involved in the mixed residential and commercial development are Kampung Puah, Kampung Puah Bahagian and Kampung Chubadak Jaya, involving 564 families.

The prime minister said that although the project was approved 10 years ago, as a responsible leader he would strive to help realise the aspirations of the people there.

Najib said he personally support the wishes of the people who wanted to see the heritage elements of the area retained but said that it would be difficult to resolve the matter through legal means.

Negotiations with the developer, therefore, would be the best way forward, he said.

"This is an old story, so we want to put the story back to its proper context with the hope that we can find a solution to this. For instance, if they have 30 acres, then they should allocate 10 or 15 acres so that we can create a Malay cultural village here," he said.

He described Kampung Puah as "unique" for its ability to retain its traditional elements in the midst of the capital city and expressed the hope that the uniqueness could be retained despite the planned development for the area.

Kampung Puah, a traditional village in Jalan Gombak on the fringe of the city, has previously been identified for the development as a cultural hub.

Information, Communications and Culture Minister Datuk Seri Dr Rais Yatim announced in February last year that the area had been chosen for the initiative in view of its traditional elements.

Earlier Najib met Mohd Tasar Sajimin, 85, and Abdul Ghani Ibrahim, 76, two of the eldest residents in the village.

The prime minister earlier joined the people for a breakfast and praised the nasi lemak menu which he said was one of the best he had tasted.

He also visited Bandar Tun Razak and performed the Friday prayers at Masjid Az-Zubair Ibnul Awwam.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Jamil Khir Baharom delivered the sermons which centred on the importance of unity.

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