

Najib says ready to declare Jalan Sultan shoplots as heritage sites
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PETALING JAYA, March 22 — Datuk Seri Najib Razak said today the government is prepared to declare buildings in Jalan Sultan, Kuala Lumpur as heritage sites, assuring owners that their shophouses will not be affected by the planned Mass Rapid Transit (MRT).

He said as prime minister he was aware of the need to have a balance between urban development and heritage, and that Malaysians needed both.

“For us to have development in Kuala Lumpur, efficient public transport necessary; it’s not a choice... the only way forward is MRT.

“We are prepared to declare as heritage buildings... (It is) important for us to preserve history, legacy but (it) should not impede progress... then you are not moving with the times,” Najib told Chinese-language radio station 988FM in an interview this morning.

“Jalan Sultan (landowners) not against MRT but they want assurance that their shophouses not affected. (We have) given assurance,” he added.

The dispute over the tunnelling along Jalan Sultan erupted after landowners were informed by the government that their properties would be acquired for the MRT project.

MRT Corp subsequently made an offer for Jalan Sultan property owners to vacate their premises for six months, and guaranteeing there would be no land acquisition, that any damage will be repaired and loss of income compensated.

Nineteen of the 23 owners along Jalan Sultan have so far said that they will pursue the offer, with another two willing to have their lots bought out by MRT Corp. A further two are still holding out.

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