

Making of a new Kan

A suggestion is to adopt the land readjustment system as a planning



LandMatters

By Salleh Buang

Federal Territories and Urban WellBeing Minister Datuk Raja Nong Chik Raja Zainal Abidin has said every landowner in the Malay heritage enclave of Kampung Baru, Kuala Lumpur, can become a millionaire if he or she accepts the redevelopment plan.

According to an article by national news agency Bernama last month, that is possible because the 200 acres earmarked for redevelopment will be worth RM20 billion in the future.

The minister said what Kampung Baru residents should avoid is to "fall prey to people who try to undermine them", or who try to hijack the government's redevelopment plan. If that happens, he warned, it would be like Kampung Kerinchi all over again.

Earlier, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak announced the setting up of a trust to implement the Kampung Baru redevelopment plan.

In doing so, Najib assured the landowners that their respective rights would be retained as well as the unique Malay identity and cultural legacy of the area. Also, the residents would not

have to move out.

While we welcome the news, remember that things are still at the early stage.

Raja Nong Chik has yet to prepare the final details of the plan. To do that properly, he must first consult the residents.

This is the age of participatory planning where stakeholders and all affected parties must be consulted before any final action is taken or any plan is finally approved. Top-down planning is dead.

Raja Nong Chik has promised that in future dialogues between the redevelopment planners and residents, the latter will have full opportunity to "give us their feedback and we will make the necessary changes accordingly".

As I see it, the Kampung Baru residents will hold him to his promise.

A recent Bernama report quoted him as saying the government will not be hasty, adding "if we do that, people will say we have a hidden agenda".

He said discussions may even take a year before the government can proceed with the plan.

Yes, dialogue is a must and caution is good, but inordi-

nate delay will be bad for the government's credibility.

Acknowledging that 100 per cent agreement by the residents will be impossible as some landowners cannot be traced, Raja Nong Chik said the government will consider various other legal alternatives.

Would the land readjustment (LR) system be one of the alternatives? Perhaps, but I am not sure.

In 2003, a seminar themed "Land Readjustment Implementation in Malaysia" was held in KL.

In his keynote address, the then Housing and Local Government minister said LR is a technique that integrates the development system through a carefully designed legal framework, administrative arrangement, planning techniques, financial institution and public participation.

The LR system combines the government's responsibility in development together with community participation and contribution.

Its advantages are the property rights of landowners and those who own rights are protected and current activities in the community can continue within the project area.

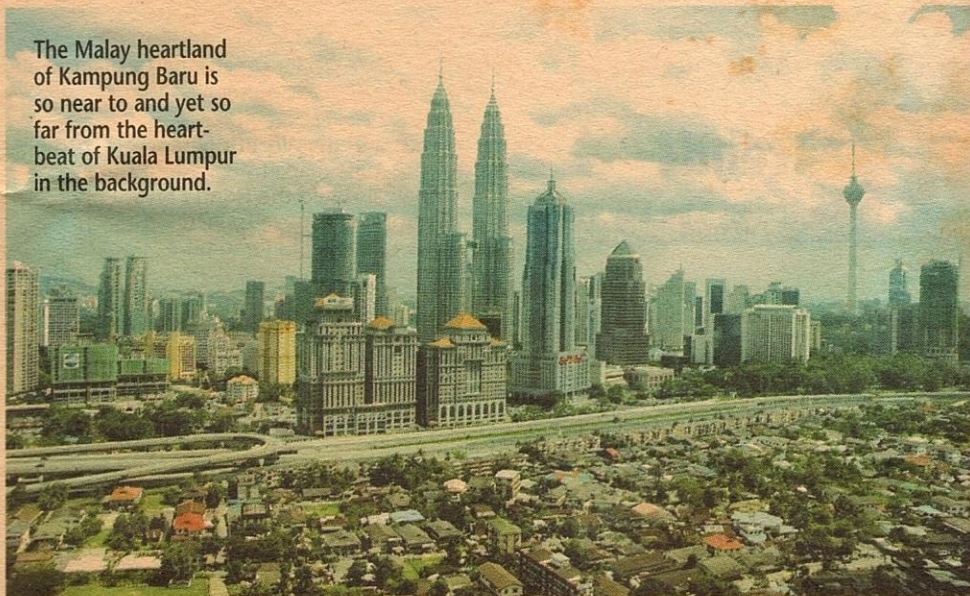
The minister said the government in 1999 approved in principle the application of the LR system.

It has been the subject of an in-depth study by the Federal Department of Town and Country Planning since

Kampung Baru

ing and development tool

The Malay heartland of Kampung Baru is so near to and yet so far from the heart-beat of Kuala Lumpur in the background.



1987, assisted by the Japan International Cooperation Agency. The objective is to introduce LR as a planning and development tool in Malaysia.

The Department's website explains LR (also known in other jurisdictions as land consolidation or land pooling) as an alternative method of land development whereby a group of land parcels (in the past haphazardly developed) are being rearranged to provide adequate basic amenities and public facilities through the cooperation and agreement of landowners.

The LR system's advantages: For landowners who participated in the LR project, they enjoy increase in land value, guaranteed ownership rights, right to stay in the

same area (no displacement or relocation), neighbourhood interactions maintained, and development is carried out comprehensively after full consultation.

For the government, the benefits are implementation of the Local Agenda 21, public involvement, smart collaborations, avoiding compulsory land acquisition, fulfilling social and development responsibilities, conservation of environment, and sustainable development.

The first LR pilot project initiated by the Department is located in Zone C1, Kampung Pulau Meranti near Putrajaya.

Surf to http://www.townplan.gov.my/ptb/TAKLIMAT%20SISTEM%20PTB%20_eng.pdf for more information.

While the LR system has worked well in many countries especially Japan where it originated, its chances to succeed here are hampered by Article 13 of the Federal Constitution – the landowners (who may even be very small in number) who do not agree to participate in the redevelopment.

Redevelopment of Kampung Baru will face many constraints. The government's endurance will be fully tested.

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