

## Sing the same tune

There seems to be no end to the controversies over land acquisitions by Mass Rapid Transit Corp Sdn Bhd (MRT Corp) for the MRT project.

In the latest episode, affected landowners in Jalan Sultan, whose properties now face the prospect of being compulsorily acquired, are clinging to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak's words that the government would be willing to tweak the alignment of the MRT route if there are any objections.

This comes after an ultimatum issued by MRT Corp to the affected landowners to sign the mutual agreement by the end of this month — of which there are only three working days left — or it will give the company no choice but to acquire the land by force.

MRT Corp CEO Azhar Abdul Hamid is reported to have said last Friday that he is aware of the PM's statement, but he issued the ultimatum anyway, saying that the current alignment has been finalised and that MRT Co lacked options, given the tight deadline for the MRT project.

Nonetheless, he said the acquisition of the Jalan Sultan land is only for six months to build the underpass and that almost all but two owners had signed. He also said there will be no demolition of any shoplot in Jalan Sultan.

The question then is, was there miscommunication between the prime minister's office and MRT Co on the finalisation of the route alignment? Or did the residents misconstrue Najib's statement?

Whatever the case, the project already has numerous problems, especially from affected landowners. Miscommunication that may potentially lead to false impressions should be avoided. It gets even worse when a general election is pending where politicians from both sides of the divide complicate matters.