

Chinatown and track alignment to remain, says MRT Corp

MASS Rapid Transit Corporation Sdn Bhd welcomed Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak recent statement expressing the government's willingness to preserve Petaling Street's unique heritage while proceeding with the MRT project without change to the alignment.

MRT Corp chief executive officer Datuk Azhar Abdul Hamid said its position had always been in line with what the Prime Minister had said and the company had been working

hard towards the preservation of the shophouses in Jalan Sultan and Jalan Petaling.

"With the mutual agreement between the shophouse owners and MRT Corp, the properties will not be acquired nor demolished. At the same time, MRT Corp will guarantee the safety of the MRT tunnel and the occupants of the shophouses during the construction period.

"We would like reinforce our position to preserve the current environ-

ment and enhance the future of Chinatown so that local residents and tourists can continue to experience the vibrancy and authenticity of this iconic area," said Azhar.

He added that any realignment would cause more social upheaval.

"Realigning to Jalan Tun Tan Cheng Lock will require at least 29 privately-owned buildings to be demolished for stations as opposed to only three buildings, which are government-owned, that are needed to build the

Pasar Seni station for the current approved alignment," he said.

For the proposed Jalan Tun Tan Cheng Lock alignment, this major road will have to be partially closed during construction. The current approved alignment beneath Jalan Sultan does not involve any major road closures.

The proposed realignment to Jalan Tun Tan Cheng Lock will also not allow for a seamless interchange between the MRT and the existing

LRT at the Pasar Seni station.

Azhar said the physical and cultural landscape of Jalan Sultan would remain and MRT Corp looked forward to working toward a mutually acceptable solution with the shopowners to ensure the successful implementation of the MRT project.

"Furthermore, the socio-economic environment of Chinatown will improve tremendously with the MRT station," he said.