

BB Plaza traders want UDA to explain

WORRIED: Traders seek assurance from complex management on their lease

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ANXIOUS over rumours that BB Plaza in Bukit Bintang is up for redevelopment, some 50 traders are seeking an explanation from the shopping mall management UDA Holdings Bhd.

The traders handed over a petition to UDA yesterday calling on the complex's management to explain the status of their tenancy.

Some of the traders had been operating at the mall for more than 25 years and were worried over their fate after tenants of a row of sidewalk cafes at the mall's entrance were issued a one-month notice to vacate their premises.

UDA had terminated their lease

and told the cafe operators to move out by June 30 to make way for the MY Rapid Transit (MRT) underground station project.

Clothing and textile shop owner Nor Akma Mohd Desa, 49, who rents three shoplots near the mall's entrance said she has been having sleepless nights after hearing about the termination notice issued to the tenants at the mall sidewalk cafes.

"How can the management do this (termination of lease) at such a short notice?"

"Furthermore, I have been here for more than two decades and the development will surely put a damper in my business as customers would not be coming here during the redevelopment period," she said, adding that soon it would be the peak period of the Arab tourist season and also the



Sidewalk cafe operators have been issued **notice to vacate**.

festive period.

Nor Akma said if the main entrances were to close during the construction of the MRT station, she would definitely lose her clients.

Gloria Jeans cafe financial controller Mohd Nasir Mohd Rashid, who had received the notice from UDA early this month, was also stressed out by the termination of the cafe's lease.

He said the cafe's 20 workers are worried about their jobs when the cafe closes.

"It is hard to get loyal workers in this industry and when we have such people, something like this happens and affects everyone's livelihood," he said.

Nasir said he had been trying to get UDA to extend its tenancy or at

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least consider paying compensation to the affected tenants but UDA had not entertained their requests.

Protem action committee spokesperson for the BB Plaza tenants, Hassan Saad, said the committee would give the mall's management a week to agree to a dialogue with them on the redevelopment issue or they will hold a protest.

"Our livelihood is affected and we want to be compensated by the management if they want us to move out from here.

"However, we hope that we do not need to move as we have been here for many years," he said.

Nasir said if the group chairman Datuk Nur Jazlan Mohamed refuses to have a dialogue with the tenants, the committee will forward the matter to the Prime Minister's office.

Apart from the petition, Nasir also handed a memorandum to UDA general manager Salamah Ismail to seek an explanation over the matter.

It was reported that UDA may ask for RM474 million from MRT Corp Bhd for BB Plaza should it have to let go of the property for the construction of the underground MRT station.

Nur Jazlan had said that the prime property could cost around RM374 million, with a further RM100 million required to compensate BB Plaza retailers who will have to leave before their lease expires.

At least 60 per cent of the 150-odd retailers at BB Plaza, which is owned by UDA and built in the 1970s, are Bumiputera.

MRT Corp subsequently said it had no plans to buy BB Plaza.

Instead, MRT Corp said, it would work with the government to build an underground station integrated with BB Plaza.