

Looking for fair solution

TTDI residents want MRT tracks to be realigned

By **S.PUSPADEVI**
puspa@thestar.com.my

RESIDENTS of Pinggir Zaaba in Taman Tun Dr Ismail, Kuala Lumpur, want Mass Rapid Transit Corporation (MRT Corp) to realign the MRT track away from their area.

During a press conference held at one of the residents' homes yesterday, 44 owners voiced out their concerns and grievances, stating that the encroachment of the final Klang Valley Mass/My Rapid Transport (KVMRT) will definitely affect their lives.

"From the very beginning, MRT Corp has been telling us not to go to the press or picket and we took this in good faith, until a recent meeting in March when MRT Corp met with 25 other owners along the street (not inclusive of the 44 home owners present) and negotiated with them to buy their houses.

"MRT Corp has to understand that we are not against the project but are worried about the remaining 44 houses? While the 25 houses selected by MRT Corp have the option to stay put, sell or move out, the remaining owners are left without any options," said Mokhtar Abdul

Karim, 68, who has been living in the area for the past 35 years.

Mokhtar said with the upcoming MRT project, the value of properties along Pinggir Zaaba had dropped significantly by 20 to 25%.

"Would anyone consider buying the properties here when there is so much noise pollution with the MRT passing by every minute of the day?

"We want MRT Corp to consider making amends in the form of compensation for devaluation of properties, other losses as well as financial assistance for renovation of the properties to make them 'livable'.

"Mitigation work for individual households in terms of noise, vibration and dust should also be done," he said.

Pinggir Zaaba Home Owners Association (PZHOA) pro-tem committee chairman Teoh Chye Tee said the presence of a massive structure in front of their homes would definitely affect their lives during and even after the construction period.

"With the construction taking place, there is bound to be foreign workers walking around and heavy machinery in the area. We cannot imagine the condition of the streets or even our homes when the project starts. To-date, we have not received

any Detailed Environment Impact Assessment (DEIA) for Pinggir Zaaba.

"There is still time for MRT Corp to realign the track or else we have to face the consequences of property value loss, risk exposure and its impact on our daily lives," said Teoh, adding that MRT Corp should be mindful of their responsibilities and obligations to the people who are adversely affected by the mega project.

He added that the residents would prefer to engage an independent body to decide on the value of their property and that MRT Corp should not be the one deciding on the final price.

Dr Saiful Azhar Rosli, a resident in the area since 1987, also agreed with the concerns of his neighbours and wants MRT Corp to realign the track.

"This has always been a peaceful neighbourhood and the majority of residents are senior citizens. We rely on the facilities and amenities in the area and when the project starts, how do you expect us to sell our homes and move out immediately?" Dr Saiful asked.

PZHOA pro-tem committee had scheduled numerous meetings with Land Public Transport Commission

(SPAD), Syarikat Prasarana Negara Bhd (SPNB) and MRT Corp since Jan 15 last year.

Despite certain assurances, both written and verbal by MRT Corp over the period of time, residents feel that they have been kept in the dark in terms of plans and reports, which were requested from MRT Corp earlier.

Segambut BN chairman Jayanthi Devi Balaguru, who was present at the meeting, said she had written to MRT Corp on June 19 stating the Pinggir Zaaba residents' request, but had not received any response to date.

"Residents want the track to be realigned or else compensated adequately.

"Why can't MRT Corp just revert to the original blue print or realign the route underground?" asked Jayanthi, adding that this would be more cost-effective compared to the current plan.

She said she would propose for a meeting with representatives from the Prime Minister's Department, Federal Territories and Urban Wellbeing Ministry, SPNB, Kuala Lumpur City Hall and MMC-Gamuda Joint Ventures Sdn Bhd to be held with the residents.