

Selangor to extend Integrity Pact to local councils

SHAH ALAM: The Selangor government is planning to extend the implementation of its Integrity Pact to 12 local councils.

Mentri Besar Tan Sri Abdul Khalid Ibrahim said the contractual pact will be implemented in phases to curb corruption and promote transparency.

"We will start with briefing council staff on the pact in the next two months," he said after handing out letters of appointment to local councillors for 2010/2011.

The pact has been implemented in Kumpulan Semesta Sdn Bhd (KSSB). It requires sand mining operators vying for contracts with the

company and KSSB board of directors to sign an agreement which prohibits any party from offering or receiving bribes in any form.

When asked about the ramifications on council staff if they are found to offer or receive bribes, Abdul Khalid said: "I think they will be out of the council."

He also defended the selection of NGO councillors who are political party members by proxy.

"They are not just party members but they are also active in their organisations," he said.

The Coalition of NGO and Professional Appointed Councillors (Conpac) and Coalition

for Good Governance (CGG) had expressed disappointment over what they termed unfair allocation under the NGO/professional quota for councillors in Selangor in a memorandum to Abdul Khalid last Monday.

Conpac chairman Tan Jo Hann had said the 25% allocation for NGO/professional councillors for the 2010/2011 term was unfair in that many appointees were proxies for political parties.

On another matter, Abdul Khalid said the state government is taking time to consider suggestions on the formation of the 20-member local government advisory council.

Guan Eng claims SDO sabotaging state govt

BY HIMANSHU BHATT
newsdesk@thesundaily.com

GEORGE TOWN: Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng said there was little hope for the state government to work with federal-appointed State Development Officer (SDO) with continued lack of communication and fractious relations between the two sides.

Lim claimed the verbal attack on him by Nik Ali Mat Yunus, who oversees all federal allocations for projects in Penang, underlined his sabotage of the state government and his "Little Napoleon" behaviour over the past two years.

In an outburst on Monday, Nik Ali had called Lim "biadap" (uncivilised or insolent), denying responsibility for the fiasco in the Botanic Gardens where two newly-built arches by the federal government are now to be torn down.

Lim yesterday said he was shocked by Nik Ali's statement and words.

"For the first time, a chief minister has been attacked with rough language and breach of etiquette by a public officer," he said.

Asked if the state could seek Nik Ali's removal, Lim said: "We can't. There is nothing we can do."

Lim also pointed to a federal Defence Ministry project in Tanjung Bungah that took place without any permission sought or plans submitted to the municipal council.

"They didn't even care about our warnings and orders to stop work. And that is because it is federal land," he said.

Construction for the hostel at Jalan Geh Chong Keat went on despite complaints from residents.

Lim said the state could not act on alleged illegal sand mining on federal land in Balik Pulau, over which the state was taken to task by Umno.

Meanwhile, Deputy Chief Minister (I) Datuk Mansor Othman said there were several projects undertaken by the federal government without permission from the local authorities.

Snags in LRT project

> Series of muddles may delay proposed mass transit extension

BY MEENA L. RAMADAS
newsdesk@thesundaily.com

KUALA LUMPUR: Lack of foresight and coordination between local councils and rail system developers are causing a series of muddles in the proposed extension of the Kelana Jaya and Ampang Light Rail Transit (LRT) system.

According to informed sources, Syarikat Prasarana Negara Bhd (Prasarana), which is in charge of the LRT extension project, is facing hurdles in implementing the LRT extension project particularly in matters concerning land for the alignment, and public response.

The source told *theSun* the company, a wholly owned subsidiary of the Finance Ministry, is in a bind as they are facing obstacles along the line alignment due to existing buildings and structures.

This coupled with strong opposition from local residents may

cause a delay in the implementation of the project which is expected to be commissioned by end of 2012.

In addition, there is no land allocated for a depot. "Without it, the LRT line cannot operate," the source said.

Prasarana is conducting studies to find a suitable depot land, according to the source.

The company is in discussions with the state government, local councils and resident associations, to relocate public utilities that will interfere with the proposed alignment.

Relocation of developments could be avoided if local councils gazette corridors for urban rail systems simultaneously with development in local draft plans, he said.

However, the source said local councils appoint consultants to draft local plans, many of whom are "town planners" who lack the knowledge and background information needed

to gazette rail alignments.

"Rail alignments require detailed information like soil condition as well as safe curves, gradients and radius for LRT systems, monorail and so on," he said.

Therefore, when developers conduct detailed ground studies for the construction of LRT routes, they find the routes are compromised by development such as schools or commercial buildings, he said.

He said local councils' penchant for approving

commercial development exacerbates the problem.

"A plot of land near Balakong which could be used as an LRT depot is currently a commercial development," the source said, adding that land acquisition is among the possible solutions to the problem.

The extensions for the Kelana Jaya and Ampang LRT lines cover Kinrara in Puchong, Subang Jaya and Putra Heights, with an additional 13 stations for both lines.

Fields, condos, schools in path of LRT alignment

OPEN fields, schools and condominium facilities are among areas that may have to make way for the LRT alignment due to the lack of ground research during the planning stages.

Subang Jaya assemblyman Hannah Yeoh said there is a possibility that certain open fields in Subang Jaya will be affected by the suggested route of the Kelana Jaya LRT line extension.

"From the proposed plans, the LRT stations are situated very near these fields," she said.

Grouses over the close proximity of the LRT alignment to units of the Saujana Residency Condominium in SS16 - as close as 4m at some points - have been widely reported. The land on which the condo's two tennis courts sit will also be acquired for the LRT line extension.

The extension of the Ampang LRT line is expected to affect the Castlefield Primary Tamil School in Puchong.

The school's management board chairman P.M. Nagamuthu said he had sent a letter objecting to the construction of the LRT line near the school as the plan indicates that five pillars will be erected on the school's playing field, 20m from the school.

He said the noise level around the school had already exceeded the minimum noise level approved by the Environment Department due to the Damansara-Puchong Highway next to the school.

"An LRT line would only make it worse," Nagamuthu said.

He said the school management board is considering shifting the school.

MPSJ president Datuk Adnan Md Ikshan said although local councils have the authority to gazette corridors for infrastructure including public transport, Prasarana has to submit proposed routes to the councils for approval to be gazetted.

BUKIT GASING PROJECT NOT YTL'S

YTL Land and Development Bhd has clarified that the development highlighted in "Alarm bells over Gasing Hill project" published on page 08 yesterday is not owned by the company. "We wish to clarify that the project the article refers to is not a development by YTL Land," Syarikat Perumahan Kemajuan Negara Sdn Bhd (wholly owned subsidiary company of YTL Land and Development) director Datuk Mohd Zainal Abidin Abdul Kadir said in a written response. *theSun* regrets the error.

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Cops refuse RM55,000 bribe

BY CHARLES RAMENDRAN
newsdesk@thesundaily.com

KUALA LUMPUR: A suspected drug dealer who was arrested for possessing enough drugs to take him to the hangman's noose offered a RM55,000 bribe to a police raiding party in exchange for his release at Kepong on Thursday.

It is learnt that the police team led by a chief inspector and several other personnel had gone to a condominium in the area at about 7pm before arresting the suspect at the carpark of the place.

On checking the 46-year-old man's car, police found about 100g of syabu in the vehicle.

Sources said the suspect, who had the cash with him, offered it to the detectives and pleaded to be let off the hook.

However, the police personnel refused the bribe. They seized the cash and handcuffed the man before ordering him to take them to his apartment unit at the block.

At the suspect's apartments, police detained a Thai woman in her 20s.

After searching the place, police found packets of opium, heroin and more syabu in undisclosed amounts.

It is believed that the man had been selling drugs to pushers in Kuala Lumpur over the past several months.

Both suspects tested positive for drug abuse.

Kuala Lumpur police narcotics department chief ACP Kang Chez Chiang, who confirmed the case, said the suspects have been remanded and are being probed under Section 39B of the Dangerous Drugs Act which carries the death sentence upon conviction.