

KL flat a focal point in urban renewal talks

Govt's redevelopment plans have been long discussed

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KUALA LUMPUR: A two-block flat complex, built in 1980 and located just a stone's throw from the city centre, has become a focal point in the discussion on urban renewal legislation.

Located conveniently next to the Dato Keramat LRT station in Ampang and a market, the Sri Perlis I complex is surrounded by parked cars.

When *The Star* arrived at the complex at around 10am, there was hardly anyone around. The only noise was from the nearby highway.

Hussin Nawawi, 60, who had just come out of the local surau, said he supports the idea of relocation but insists that residents must be properly informed of any

such decisions.

"I've heard about this for many years, but there's still no concrete decision on whether we need to move out or not," he said.

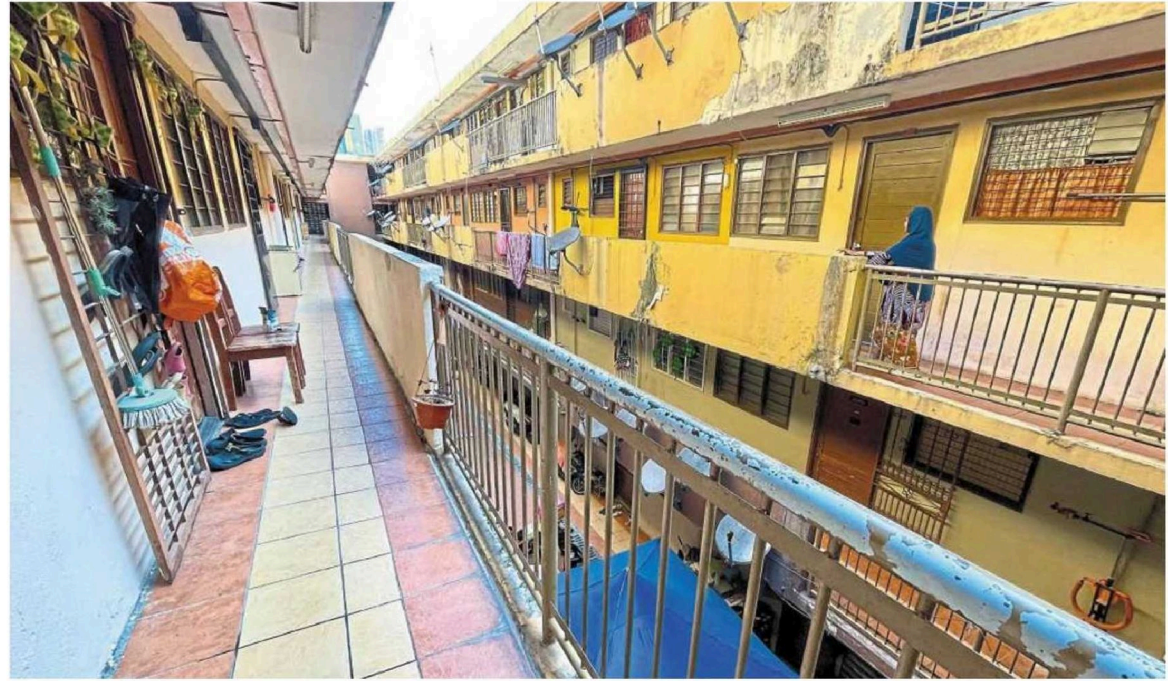
"If we were to be relocated, where would we go? And who will cover the new rent?"

Hussin and his family have been living in the flats since its early years, with his late father being the original owner of their unit.

He currently resides in the two-bedroom unit with his sister Normah Nawawi, 57.

They pay a modest rent of just over RM100 monthly, supported by Welfare Department assistance.

"Relocating to a new house might mean higher rent, which I can't afford," said Hussin, a former fish seller at the Datuk



Ageing buildings: The Sri Perlis I flats in Kuala Lumpur are one of the properties mentioned by the Prime Minister as needing to be redeveloped. — FAIHAN GHANI/The Star

Keramat market.

Sri Perlis I has 80 units and was one of the earlier public housing projects erected by the Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL).

It came to public attention when Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim mentioned it as one of the properties that needed to be redeveloped under the proposed Urban Renewal Act.

Anwar has also rubbished allegations that the proposed Act will marginalise Malays and the bumiputra community from urban development.

Normah, who has limited

mobility, hopes the government will consider her needs if relocation becomes necessary.

"I can't walk or move freely, and even the toilet needs renovations for my use. If we need to move, I hope the new unit accommodates my needs," she said.

Another resident, who wished to remain anonymous, said urban renewal issues have been discussed for several years.

"Talks about moving us have been ongoing, but there's no update. If it finally happens, why not?" said the resident, who has lived in the apartment since the

early 1990s.

Another resident, who wished to be known only as Ahmad, 65, said he was willing to relocate if it aided the area's development.

Addressing the Parliament on Feb 26, Anwar had said that the proposed legislation aims to redevelop dilapidated housing, particularly flats and apartments.

The law would lower the threshold for necessary approvals from flat owners.

For buildings less than 30 years old, 80% approval will be required, while those over 30 years will need 75% approval.