

Saddam: No price increase for Caura HDC townhouses

IN THE SENATE

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THERE has been no price increase for the 100 Housing Development Corporation (HDC) townhouses at Caura Royal Road that are completed and are to be distributed, Government Minister Saddam Hosein has said.

Hosein, the Minister of Land and Legal Affairs, made the statement as he wound up the debate on a motion to approve the Land Acquisition (Requisition) Order, 2026, on Tuesday.

The motion was approved with Opposition support in Parliament last Friday and was also approved in the Senate.

Opposition Senator Vishnu Dhanpaul was the sole contributor to the debate Tuesday, during which he expressed concern about the prices of the homes being increased.

He said the former administration turned the sod for the project in May 2024 to provide affordable homes for low- and middle-income earners, with an estimated price per unit of \$950,000 to \$1.1 million.

He claimed that the unit prices have now increased 'exponentially'.

Dhanpaul also claimed that individuals had been approved and provided letters of offer for the units, but that he was informed these have now been voided.

He further said that HDC units in Carlsen Field have been increased, as he read from a letter purportedly from the HDC to a potential homeowner advising that the purchase price increased from \$575,000 to \$750,000.

Dhanpaul concluded by noting that the lands formed part of what the State acquired from the liquidation of CL Financial, and that the Opposition supports the motion as it pertains to recovering part of the \$25 billion expended on the company.

'I have absolutely no sympathy for the hierarchy of CL financial. I have sympathy, all my sympathy will be for the taxpayers,' said Dhanpaul.

In winding up the debate, Hosein said when the motion was debated in the House of Representatives last week, Housing Minister Dr David Lee had already indicated to the country that the prices of the units had not changed.

He criticised Dhanpaul, saying he was trying to score political points.

'These houses will be allocated in a fair transparent and equitable manner,' said Hosein.

Hosein further said that it took a UNC Government months to do what the former PNM Government could not do in ten years with respect to the lands under CL Financial.

The Minister explained that the 100 townhouses could not be distributed because the process had to be completed to acquire the land titles in accordance with the Land Acquisition Act.

He said this was an issue the Ministry has been identifying, noting that there are several State and Government projects at advanced stages of execution or close to completion, but the State does not have formalised titles for the lands.

However, Hosein assured that the Government was working on these matters.

He also detailed the challenges of the lengthy land acquisition process, noting that even after a motion receives support and is approved in both Houses, there are still more steps to complete, such as preparing and publishing another legal notice.

'I can tell you that this matter is engaging the attention of the Ministry of Land and Legal Affairs in a very short time we were able to engage both houses of Parliament and brought two successful land acquisition orders,' he said.

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