

TH yet to sell TRX land despite Najib's advice

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PARLIAMENT Lembaga Tabung Haji has yet to sell its controversial Tun Razak Exchange (TRX) land, five weeks after Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak advised them to do so.

This was according to Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Jamil Khir Baharom during the winding-up of the Eleventh Malaysia Plan (11MP) at the Dewan Rakyat.

"We are still in the process (of selling), we are looking for the highest profit," he told Tony Pua (DAP-Petaling Jaya Utara), who asked the minister how soon the transaction could be struck.

This equity owned by Muslims should be handled properly, he emphasised.

This, however was contradicted by Tabung Haji chairperson Abdul Azeez Abdul Rahim, who originally said they will sell the land in one week's time, which was later revised to a few weeks time.

Azeez (photo) even expressed confidence that Tabung Haji would secure at least RM5 million profit for the TRX land, which it bought at RM188 million from debt-laden 1MDB.

A few BN parliamentarians, including Abdul Ghapur Salleh (BN-Kalabakan), have urged the pilgrims' fund to keep the land instead.

Following that, Jamil said he would refer the views for the board to reconsider.

Tabung Haji made its own decision to purchase the land, with the intention that TRX would become a place where its 8.7 million depositors would be proud of, he said.

When they 'take selfies' at TRX, they will have a sense of nostalgia just like people taking selfies at KLCC, he said.

In an immediate response, Pua asked why was Tabung Haji still evaluating the best bid in the interests of the pilgrimage fund despite Azeez promising that the deal will be "completed in a week or two".

"This is clearly an excuse to cover up the fact that Tabung Haji is having difficulty convincing any buyer to purchase the land for a price higher than what it paid.

"Determining bids for a piece of land doesn't take five weeks. All that needs to be determined is what is the price per square feet is and how soon can the payment be made," he said.

Azeez, who had repeatedly boasted of the “profitable” prospective sale, which was reiterated by the prime minister himself, must explain what happened to his many buyers queuing up to buy the land from Tabung Haji, he said.

“His failure to complete the transaction will only go to prove that Tabung Haji paid too high a price for the land and no other buyers are interested in acquiring the land at a higher price,” he said.

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