

## **PM: Temple built without permission, country must follow rule of law**

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Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim has put his foot down regarding the land controversy at Jalan Masjid India, saying the matter must be handled according to the rule of law.

In his speech at the 218th Police Day celebration this morning, Anwar said the temple was erected on a piece of land without permission from its previous and current owners.

"...regarding the plan to construct a mosque on a site which houses a temple that was built without permission.

"Some people do not want to use the term illegal, it's okay, it is just a term. But the temple did not get permission from the land owner, be it the (Kuala Lumpur) City Hall (DBKL) as its previous owner or the company that owns it now.

"So, our country has laws and we have to follow the laws.

"But because we want to maintain a good relationship between the multiethnic groups in this country, we are doing something that we did not have to do, which is engage in peaceful negotiation, because this is their (Hindus) house of worship and should be relocated properly," he added.

The prime minister was referring to the controversy involving a piece of land at Jalan Bunus off Jalan Masjid India, which houses the Dewi Sri Pathrakaliamman Temple.

The temple is said to have been built in 1893, decades before DBKL and its predecessor agency were established.

After Merdeka, DBKL became the land owner before it was sold in 2014 to the textile company Jakel Group.

Jakel recently announced its plan to build a mosque there, which it will name the Madani Mosque, with Anwar scheduled to officiate its groundbreaking ceremony this Thursday.

### **Mosques have been demolished too**

Saying that the temple has to be relocated, Anwar pointed out that it is not the first house of worship to have been moved or demolished for violating the law.

"My religion never teaches me to be hostile towards others or to destroy their belongings. But do not mistake us for being weak.

"There was a mosque in Lahad Datu that was torn down because it did not follow the law. So was a surau in Perak and a mosque in Sentul.

"To us, this country must be based on the law," he stressed.

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