

Govt set to protect historic landmarks

THE Government is identifying historic landmarks and buildings in Kuala Lumpur and other areas to register them as national heritage, preventing the precious sites from being sold to private owners.

Culture, Arts and Heritage Minister Datuk Seri Dr Rais Yatim said the Government was concerned that heritage buildings could "easily fall into the hands of the private sector, including those who may be foreigners".

"It appears that some heritage buildings have not been registered. The proposed National Heritage Act will make it efficacious for us to register such sites and take the necessary action," he said.

This came about after plans to convert Central Market into a cultural centre turned awry when the Government discovered that Dana-harta had sold the place to Central Market Sdn Bhd two years ago.

"So now we cannot have a direct interest in Central Market. In that sense we were too late," Dr Rais said.

The best the ministry can do is to exert our interest in controlling those who rent the space," he told reporters at the Parliament lobby yesterday.

Dr Rais said the Government



Dr Rais: 'Some heritage buildings have not been registered'

wanted to ensure that at least 30% of the vendors there were selling artistic artifacts and that they offered more local than foreign items.

Besides this, he said, the Government would work with the management to ensure that vendors would be charged "reasonable" rent. There had been complaints of hefty increases in rental.