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Najib opposed property purchase

Mara didn't get approval from PM to acquire Dudley House apartment

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PUTRAJAYA: The purchase of an apartment block in Australia by Majlis Amanah Rakyat (Mara) did not receive the approval of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, said the Mara chairman.

Tan Sri Annuar Musa said that the prime minister, in a letter dated May 10, had opposed the purchase and Mara duly appealed the decision which was eventually approved by Mara's Economic Council.

His statement came after he reportedly said at a recent press conference that the purchase had been sanctioned by Najib.

"During the question-and-answer session, somebody claimed that I said 'yes', that the PM had approved the purchase.



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"Actually, after the proposed purchase was presented to the Finance Ministry, it did not get the approval of the PM.

"The Finance Ministry gave us a letter dated May 10 to inform that the purchase is not approved by the PM," he said.

He said following that, the Rural and Regional Development Ministry with Mara appealed the decision to the economic council.

"At the council, the matter was discussed more broadly in the presence of Bank Negara and economic ministers. It was within the council that the purchase was approved.

"Also, the council only approved 30% of Mara's funds to purchase the property.

"The remainder had to be borrowed from banks," Annuar told reporters yesterday.

He was speaking after going to the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission to submit documents related to the purchase.

"Mara decided to give full support to MACC in the investigations into the matter so we are here to give some documents to make it easier for them," he said.

Annuar also said that Mara would appoint an international auditor to conduct a more "credible audit" of the council accounts.

"We decided that the internal audit we conducted is not enough, so we will be appointing an international auditor. This will be brought up at the next council meeting on July 1," he said.

Australian newspaper *The Age* reported that Malaysians linked to Mara had overpaid the developers of Dudley House by A\$4.75mil (RM13.8mil) for the five-storey apartment block in Melbourne in 2013. The asking price was A\$22.5mil (RM65.3mil).

The daily also reported that corporate records revealed that firms, which had issued some dubious invoices, were "closely linked to several powerful Malaysian figures, including a top Mara official".