

Kedah firm on tearing down 100-year-old madrasah
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PAS CLAIMS: State govt is replicating Saudi system of acquiring land

ALOR STAR: The Pas-led state government will go ahead with plans to demolish Madrasah Sahiliah in Kanchut, here, to make way for a RM500 million shopping complex and luxury homes, the State Assembly was told yesterday.

Pas is claiming that it is replicating the Saudi system of acquiring land, a claim challenged by a Barisan Nasional assemblyman.

Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Azizan Abdul Razak (Pas-Sungai Limau) said, pending the outcome of a legal redress sought by opponents of the project, the state government has no plans to rescind its decision on the matter.

He said there was nothing anyone could do to politicise the acquisition of the 100-year-old endowment land where the madrasah stands.

"The land was acquired legally and we paid RM1.4 million to the Kedah Islamic Religious Council for the land.

"We will go ahead with the demolition of the madrasah if the court rules in our favour. There are no real issues on claims on the land but some quarters have turned it into an issue," he told the house when responding to a written question from state opposition leader Datuk Mahdzir Khalid (BN-Pedu).

Azizan said of the total RM1.4 million compensation, RM543,000 was for the madrasah and the balance, for the land.

Meanwhile, Datuk Ahmad Bashah Md Hanipah (BN-Bakar Bata), in a supplementary question on the same matter, chided Azizan for claiming that the land acquisition was carried out in the same manner the Saudi Arabian government carries out its development programmes.

"The Saudi government does not acquire endowment land to build mosques, houses or surau because it develops them on vacant land."

On Jan 5, a group of concerned members filed an injunction at the High Court to prevent the madrasah from being demolished. Hearing for the case has been set for April 25.

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