

MIC Youth chief, others held for protesting demolition of 101-year-old Hindu temple

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BY MUZLIZA MUSTAFA and DIYANA IBRAHIM

MIC Youth chief T. Mohan became the latest politician to be held by police in a protest to stop Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) from demolishing the 101-year-old Sri Muneswarar Kaliyaman Hindu temple in Jalan P. Ramlee in the capital today.

Police also arrested a few others after a commotion outside the temple as more supporters streamed into the area to try and stop the demolition. The temple has to make way for a pedestrian walkway.

All those detained were handcuffed and taken to the Dang Wangi district police headquarters.

This morning, police detained PKR's S. Jayathas for the same reason,

Jayathas, the PKR deputy human rights chief, was taken to Dang Wangi for obstructing civil servants from carrying out their duty under Section 186 of the Penal Code.

Lawyer Latheefa Koya said Jayathas, PKR vice-president N. Surendran and Kota Alam Shah assemblyman M. Manoharan went to the temple around 8am after receiving a message from the temple committee about the presence of City Hall officers there.

"They came and started to remove the deities and wanted to demolish the temple without any warning," said Latheefa.

Surendran, who is also the temple's lawyer, said more than 100 City Hall officers were there this morning.

The chaos in the temple as police break through the gate and try to enter, while devotees and their supporters try to block the passage. The Malaysian Insider pic by Afif Abd Halim, September 1, 2013. The chaos in the temple as police break through the gate and try to enter, while devotees and their supporters try to block the passage. The Malaysian Insider pic by Afif Abd Halim, September 1, 2013. "They brought over all the machines including the bulldozers, ready to destroy the temple. They also brought a group of thugs to scare off the devotees who came to perform special prayers for National Day," he said.

The action taken by City Hall came a day after Malaysia celebrated its 56th National Day.

Surendran said City Hall's action was not valid as it did not have a court order to destroy the temple or deities.

The temple, which was built in 1911, sits on reserve land meant for roads or walkways.

Last year, the temple committee received an eviction notice after Hap Seng Land, which is constructing a 30-storey office building on the adjacent plot, was told that it would only be given a Certificate of Fitness if it built an 8-foot (2.4m) walkway along the building according to City Hall requirements.

But that could not be done because the temple occupies that land.

Despite the intervention of local government, the temple committee and the developer failed to come to an agreement.

The developer previously offered to relocate the temple to Sepang but it was rejected as the temple has historical value.

After numerous failed attempts to reach an agreement, the developer took City Hall to court.

The court served an injunction to the temple and City Hall served it an eviction notice.

The temple houses two main deities, Muneswarar and Kaliyaman, hence its name. - September 1, 2013.

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