

Family want apology, compensation for burial plot mix-up

By **BAVANI M**

bavanim@thestar.com.my

TWENTY-SIX years ago, the family of the late Kok Ah Chang @ Ke Lian bought a burial plot for RM200 at the Christian cemetery in Cheras managed by Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL).

The plot was meant to fulfil the woman's request to be buried beside her husband, Khaw Choon Cheow, who died on Nov 22, 1998.

On May 24, this year, Kok died of pneumonia.

However, when the family attempted to honour her final wish, they were shocked to learn from DBKL that another body had been buried in her plot.

The family claimed that DBKL informed them that the only option remaining was for Kok to be buried in her husband's plot.

"We were shocked, and at that time we had no other option but to bury our mother in the same plot, on top of our father, even though that was never her



Ng (second from right) with Pek Suan (third from right) and others at the press conference.

wish," said Kok's daughter, Khaw Pek Suan, when met at the lawyer's office in Plaza Mont Kiara, Kuala Lumpur,

"We had to watch our father's tombstone get demolished to make way for my mother's burial.

"We have yet to rebuild the tombstone.

"We are still hoping DBKL can clarify how our mother's plot was allocated to someone else, as we are hoping there might still be a chance to have her buried next to our father," Pek

Suan added.

She and her siblings have engaged a lawyer and are seeking a formal apology as well as compensation from DBKL.

The family's lawyer Ng Kian Nam said besides an apology, the family wanted an explanation on why someone else was buried in the plot intended for Kok.

"They want the burial plot returned so that their late mother's final wish to be laid to rest beside her husband can be fulfilled.

"They want DBKL to cover the cost of demolishing their father's tombstone, amounting to RM1,400, as well as the expense of building a new tombstone for him.

"The family is also seeking compensation, to be determined by the court, for pain and suffering as well as emotional and other forms of distress including for breach of contract," he added.

He claimed that DBKL had

responded to the family's initial letter of demand, stating that, according to their records, one of Kok's children, (Khaw Kok Keong) who bought the plot on Nov 26, 1998, as a future burial plot for his mother, had allowed another person to be buried at the plot.

Pek Suan said it did not make sense for her brother to have bought the plot for their mother and two days later, allow a stranger to be buried there.

According to Ng, the family will file a civil suit if DBKL does not comply with their demands.

When contacted, DBKL's Corporate Planning Department director Zurida Hashim requested time to investigate the matter.

"We are truly sympathetic to the family's situation. Since the incident occurred some time ago, we need to understand what transpired.

"Please allow us to work towards a solution that accommodates everyone," Zurida said.