

RAMANAN: REFRAIN FROM RAISING RACIAL ISSUES

He says any politicisation of temple relocation must stop

KUALA LUMPUR

DEPUTY Entrepreneur Development and Cooperatives Minister Datuk Seri R. Ramanan has advised all parties, including the public and political leaders, to refrain from raising racial and religious issues.

He said the prevalence of racial and religious remarks by irresponsible individuals has been rampant of late.

"Everything is being racially incited.

"Just look at the comments (on social media), not only from ordinary people, but also from political leaders. Stop exploiting religious and racial issues.

"Is there really no other topic

to discuss?

"This is just my opinion. Recently, some opposition leaders questioned whether the prime minister can serve for 10 years or two terms.

"Some have even argued that doing so would be religiously inappropriate. What kind of madness is this? Why must everything be tied to religion and race? I am very upset about this issue, so please, it needs to stop."

He said this after visiting the Dewi Sri Pathrakaliamman temple in Jalan Masjid India here yesterday.

When asked if the relocation of the temple had also been politicised, Ramanan said if it was, it must stop.

Ramanan, who is Sungai Buloh member of parliament, said the government has never used the term "demolish" but instead has consistently used the words "relocate" in reference to the issue concerning the temple.

As such, he urged all parties to choose their words carefully, as certain statements could hurt or



Deputy Entrepreneur Development and Cooperatives Minister Datuk Seri R. Ramanan speaking to reporters after visiting the Dewi Sri Pathrakaliamman temple in Jalan Masjid India, Kuala Lumpur, yesterday. BERNAMA PIC

offend others.

He gave his assurance that the government would not demolish the temple and that the matter had been discussed with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

"The issue here is that the land belongs to a private entity, but the government is still taking this matter seriously.

"The prime minister has discussed this with me and is concerned about this issue. He also wants to find a fair and harmonious solution," he added.

Meanwhile, Kuala Lumpur City Hall said it is playing a facilitating role to ensure the smooth relocation of the temple from the private land to a new location.

Mayor Datuk Seri Dr Maimunah Mohd Sharif said as a party entrusted by the government, City Hall has taken steps to find the best solution for all parties involved.

"City Hall assures that every step that is being and will be taken is in line with the principle

of freedom of religion as enshrined in the Federal Constitution," she said.

Maimunah said the temple's relocation would be carried out transparently and fairly, involving discussions with the stakeholders, to ensure its smooth implementation.

"City Hall has identified a new suitable spot for the temple where devotees can continue to carry out their religious activities comfortably and harmoniously," she said.

City Hall, she said, had also taken note of the proposal to build a mosque on land owned by a private company in Jalan Masjid India, the same location where a small part of the temple is located.

She said that the project was proposed by the private company as the legal owner of the land and not by the government.

Meanwhile, temple chairman K. Barthiban said it was ready to cooperate in discussions with City Hall on the temple's relocation. **Bernama**