

Provide alternative land, says expert

LAND experts and local leaders want the state government to provide alternative land as replacement for the gazetted Hindu burial grounds that had been used for other purposes.

Local council and planning law expert Derek Fernandez said it is the duty of the local authority to oversee adequate and accessible burial sites for its residents.

"The state government and the local authority should stop the misuse of cemetery land and instead put in the infrastructure to provide for efficient use of the land rather than leave it idle," he added.

Fernandez said land designated for graveyard through zoning and land title should not be used for other purposes.

He said the use of a land stipulated for cemetery should not be used for commercial or agricultural activities and it was deemed illegal.

"These land are viable for forfeiture and those misusing the

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— DEREK FERNANDEZ

land for commercial and agricultural purposes can be fined up to RM500,000 and six months jail under the Town and Country Planning Act 1976," he added.

Fernandez said in the event that the land title and zoning had been changed, then there should be a substitute provided for by the state.

Selayang municipal councillor T. Letchimanan said the redevelop-

ment should not have happened since burial grounds were so scarce.

"It is sad to see that the people's land had been sold off for commercial purposes," he said, adding that the people of Rawang were aware of the problems but did not know the details.

He said Rawang folk and the state government should find the truth behind the development of the land.

"We need to find out what exactly happened and why there was no alternative land for the parcel that was taken away.

Now finally due to the work of some individuals we believe an alternative land is being handed over but we want black-and-white proof," he said.

Although the land size may not be as big as the earlier burial ground that was sold off, he quoted the old adage "something is better than nothing".