

Pudu jail wall to be demolished Monday



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KUALA LUMPUR: When the clock strikes 10pm on Monday, the 394-metre stretch of Pudu Jail wall fronting Jalan Pudu will be demolished after having served its purpose for the past 100 years.

The wall goes down to accommodate the widening of the busy road that fronts it.

Construction on the 4.5 metre wall, also known as Pudu Goal, started in 1891 on Jalan Hang Tuah and it was fully completed in 1895 at a cost of RM15,360.90.

The wall, which had once set a record for the longest mural in the world (384 metres), now has no meaning as it stands amidst flourishing development in the Bukit Bintang Golden Triangle.

The prison itself stopped operating in 1996 and prisoners were shifted to the Sungai Buloh Prison, 36km from here, after the building could no longer cater to the high volume of up to 6,550 people at a time since 1985.

The memories linked to the historic landmark will remain part of the country's history even after the wall is torn down, a move proposed by Kuala Lumpur mayor Datuk Seri Ahmad Fuad Ismail, which aimed to ease traffic congestion in the area through a road-widening project including the construction of an underpass.

A check by Bernama revealed soil levelling works on the prison premises completed and awaiting demolition of the wall Monday night, which has received negative reaction from those who know the building's historical value and uniqueness.



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He said although the building had housed criminals, it should be preserved for its own unique values.

"This prison has even held several prominent convicts and, until today, the public still come by to see and take photos there," he said.

Fifty-two-year-old Chew Chong Huai said he was saddened to know a building with such historical value, which should be made a heritage site, would be torn down.

"In other countries, like China for example, historical buildings would be kept and preserved as tourist attractions," he said.

Irwan Hashim, 32, also disagreed with the move to demolish the prison complex and wall, saying the city was already congested with development.

"Enough with these developments. Kuala Lumpur is packed with buildings, shopping complexes and such, so let's not destroy whatever is left of our heritage," he said.

Meanwhile, a tourist from the Philippines, 49-year-old Farancisco B. Lopez said the Pudu Prison should be preserved for tourism purposes like the Alcatraz prison in California, United States.

"It's a waste and pointless. I was told that this building is one of the historical sites in Malaysia because it was built in the 1800s during the British colonial era, he added. - Bernama

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