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Little India to be renamed

By EDWARD RAJENDRA

KLANG: A controversial move to change the name of Klang's famous Little India to Medan Kelana has sparked a public outcry.

Elected representatives, businessmen, tourists and even a state executive council member want the name Little India to be retained.

Despite the controversy, the municipal council is soon going to remove the name Little India from two signboards here, and put up new ones declaring the place as Medan Kelana.

The name was chosen as the main road in Little India is called Jalan Tengku Kelana.



Controversial matter: Dr Xavier (left) speaking to Raman (third from left) and Kuala Lumpur and Selangor Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Klang District) treasurer S.M. Gopal (right) on the name change of Little India.

Klang municipal councillor Ho San Sang confirmed the name change, saying it was part of a “rebranding exercise.” The district tourism committee member did not elaborate.

State exco member Dr Xavier Jeyakumar told *The Star* the name change would defeat all the hard work that had gone into building Little India into a tourist icon, and that the move would also erase the identity of the area.

Sekinchan assemblyman Ng Suee Lim said he would bring this matter to the state exco because it was wrong to simply change the name of a place that could affect tourism.

Little India here is a famous shopping enclave with 100 pre-war shops on either side of Jalan Tengku Kelana. It draws shoppers by the thousands and is an important income generator for Klang.

Kuala Lumpur and Selangor Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Klang District) chairman N.P. Raman said changing the name would also erase the identity of Klang's Little India – which had been built into a household brand known all over the world after 50 years of hard work.

American tourist Michelle Smith, 25, and her friend Miyoko Takagi, 23, said it would be a shame to change the name of a place so easily recalled by tourists.

Klang resident Wong Wei Yin, 63, said many people were unhappy with the name change because folks here had fond memories of the area linked to the Indian community.