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Irate over smelly clogged drains

Business park traders say stench near morning market turning customers away

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VISITORS and traders at the Kuchai Lama morning market along Jalan Kuchai Maju 14, Kuala Lumpur, have had to put up with the nauseating stench of overflowing drain water along the road.

The traders who own shops or operate stalls there suffer the most and have tolerated this for over a month, while it is an unpleasant experience for customers who visit the coffee shops for breakfast.

"It is worse when it rains because the road next to the morning market becomes flooded with slippery, putrid water," said Kuchai Entrepreneurs Park morning market association chairman Tan Ping Hai.

He spoke on behalf of 10 association members, and said the stall owners operating along Jalan Kuchai Maju 14 were unhappy with the authorities for not addressing their complaints.

Tan, who sells chicken at a stall located near the drain next to the coffee shop, said he and other stall operators had to lift up the drain covers on their own to clear out the rubbish and gunk in attempt to clear flood waters on rainy days, or risk losing customers.

Hafiz Nazim, who runs a



Chin showing the stagnant mass of solidified oil under the sump cover of the blocked drain in Jalan Kuchai Maju 15.

mixed rice stall on the same road, said it was a challenge to work in such conditions because the stink was driving away customers. His stall is one of the hardest hit as it is located right in front of a flood-prone area.

"My business has dropped 30% because my customers cannot bear the stench. Even if they do order, they leave halfway without finishing their food," he said.

The stall operators and shop owners said despite Alam Flora workers arriving many times to

clear the drains, the problem continued to recur.

Wilayah MCA Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) Affairs bureau chief Banie Chin said the cause of flooding could be due to a collapsed drain wall in Jalan Kuchai Maju 15, which has blocked water flow in perimeter drains.

During heavy rain, he said flooding affected Jalan Kuchai Maju 13, 14, and 15.

At first, they presumed that the developer of an ongoing high-rise development in Jalan Kuchai Maju 13 should be held responsible for repairing the drain wall, but Havana Solaris managing director Richard Lim said the area was not included in the project's boundary.

In response to Chin's request, Lim



The silt traps at the construction site along Jalan Kuchai Maju 13. — Photos: LOW BOON TAT/The Star

said his workers opened one sump cover to remove rubble, rubbish and solidified oil/grease, but the blockage did not clear up.

"We suspect parts of the drain may be blocked by more debris from the collapsed wall but unless we lift up the remaining sump covers along the 1.5m drain to check, we cannot say for sure.

"We have not continued the checks because the area is under DBKL's jurisdiction," said Lim.

DBKL Seputeh branch office assistant engineer Ismail Hashim said they were aware of the problem.

"The repair work for this drain has come under DBKL's Civil Engineering and Drainage Department.

"There are also plans to resurface

the road in Jalan Kuchai Maju 13. "We have been informed that repair work on the drain and road resurfacing will begin soon," said Ismail.

He added that eateries throwing used cooking oil and indiscriminate rubbish dumping by residents nearby also caused the drain blockage and flooding problems.

Alam Flora area operations supervisors Vijay Kumar Ganesha and Mohammad Ibnu Shafarudin Walid said plastic mineral bottles and solidified cooking oil from nearby restaurants were commonly dug up by workers clearing the affected drains.

Chin said he would arrange for a meeting with restaurant owners in the business park to come up with possible solutions to the problems.

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