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KL shops can close at 2am

Move done to help businesses recover from prolonged MCO

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KUALA LUMPUR: Closing time for convenience stores and restaurants here is now 2am and not midnight as decided earlier by Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL).

Saying he was not "overturning" the decision of the Kuala Lumpur mayor, Federal Territories Minister Tan Sri Annuar Musa said he hoped business operators would have a chance to earn more.

"He (mayor Datuk Nor Hisham Ahmad Dahlan) brought the matter up to me while we were in the car and my opinion was businesses had incurred immense losses since the movement control order was enforced.

"So, if they can operate for longer hours, they will be able to make up for lost time," Annuar told reporters during a park beautification programme at Taman Awam Rimba Kiara here yesterday.

He said following the mayor's agreement, the new closing hours will come into effect today.

Annuar reminded businesses not to take advantage and flout closing times during the recovery movement control order (MCO) period.

"After 2am, close your shop, go home and sleep. Don't carry on till the wee hours of the morning."

He said DBKL would allow the new 2am ruling as long as the new



More time to eat: Eateries along Jalan Alor are hoping for better business now that they can open until 2am. — IZZRAFIQ ALIAS/The Star.

closing hours were not a threat to public safety and that the SOP stipulated by the National Security Council was observed.

Earlier, DBKL said that it would stick to the midnight closing time despite an announcement by Senior Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob on Thursday that business premises like eateries and convenience stores would be allowed to extend their operating hours till 2am.

Eateries in the city heaved a sigh of relief with the good news.

Malaysia Singapore Coffeeshop Proprietors' General Association president Datuk Ho Su Mong, in welcoming the minister's decision,

said: "We regretted the decision of DBKL for not allowing us to open until 2am. This is a good decision, the additional hours will be good for business."

Ho said KL was an economic hub and the country was in the middle of an economic recovery; it was apt that businesses in the capital be allowed to keep opening for longer hours.

Indian Muslim Restaurant Owners Association (Presma) president Datuk Jawahar Ali said allowing eateries to open until 2am was good enough "as we are not even asking to operate for 24 hours".

"We appreciate it because business is slow these days, so the

extended hours will be helpful.

"Hopefully, restaurants will be able to get more income from the additional opening hours.

"The 2am ruling will be a great help for eateries that cater for night shift workers and eateries near tourist spots because local tourism is picking up," he added.

Jalan Alor Hawkers and Dealers Association secretary Simon Ang said allowing eateries to open for two extra hours would help hawkers make a little additional income.

"We really appreciate the announcement by the minister and think it is a great move.

"We definitely wished to extend until 2am. Tourists have been scarce since the MCO and all the traders are suffering.

"There are expatriates and local tourists still coming and touring KL but before this they'd have to finish their meal by 11pm and we would quickly have to close by midnight.

"So it was also frustrating for our customers," he said, adding that business had only recovered by about 30% at the most.

Malaysian Indian Restaurant Owners Association (Primas) president T. Muthusamy appreciated the decision, saying that Annuar understood the significance of supporting economic activity.

"His announcement will also avoid confusion among business owners, consumers and enforcement authorities in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor," he said.