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BARELY two months after an underutilised pedestrian bridge in front of Malaysian Association for the Blind (MAB) in Brickfields was demolished, Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) received a request to take down another pedestrian bridge in the neighbourhood.

The bridge in question — located along Jalan Tun Sambanthan — has not only reportedly become a white elephant, stakeholders claim the lift shaft has not been certified by the Occupational Safety and Health Department (DOSH).

This bridge is located in front of the Saravanaa Bhavan restaurant and a pawn shop, as well as across the Shell building along the main street of Brickfields.

United Tapah Resources Sdn Bhd director Yuvapandian Ramasamy, who operates the pawn shop, complained that his shopfront was blocked by the lift shaft structure.

"People cannot see the entrance of my shop because it is blocked.

"The structure (lift shaft) has also taken up a huge portion of the five-foot way, making it inconvenient for pedestrians," he said.

"For years, people have ignored the bridge. It then became a rubbish dumping site."

Yuvapandian also alleged that the bridge's lifts were not certified by DOSH, hence it was under lock and key and never opened to the public.

"I know because the lift shaft faces the entrance of my shop and the lift has never been opened for use."

He also claimed that the lift shaft was not maintained.

"So when I saw that DBKL had finally demolished the bridge near MAB, I immediately wrote to the authorities as well as Federal Territories Minister Tan Sri Annuar Musa, requesting that they demolish this bridge too because it is another white elephant," he said.

Another business owner, who did not wish to be identified, said the bridge was underutilised.

"Vagrants sleep under the bridge, and some have used the lift shaft area as their toilet. They even defecate there," he said.

Another stakeholder in the area, N. Panchacharam, who owns the building next to where the pedestrian bridge is located, affirmed that the bridge was not used.

"The lift has been under lock

Brickfields stakeholders want bridge removed

They claim it is underutilised and a safety hazard for pedestrians on five-foot way

and key for so long now that the authorities should just remove the lift shaft completely, like they have with the other bridge at Jalan Sultan Abdul Samad," said Panchacharam.

When contacted, DBKL Project Implementation executive director Datuk Azmi Abdul Hamid said he was not aware of the request and that he needed time to find out more about the matter.

StarMetro subsequently learned that DBKL officers had paid a visit to the site and spoken to business owners in the area.

DOSH, when contacted for comments on the matter, said they needed time as well to investigate.

In 2010, DBKL announced that it was going to build the bridges to benefit the community there, including the visually impaired.

Five bridges were built along Jalan Tun Sambanthan and Jalan Sultan Abdul Samad, at a cost of over RM10mil.

Three of the bridges were installed with six lifts meant for the disabled, costing over RM2mil each.

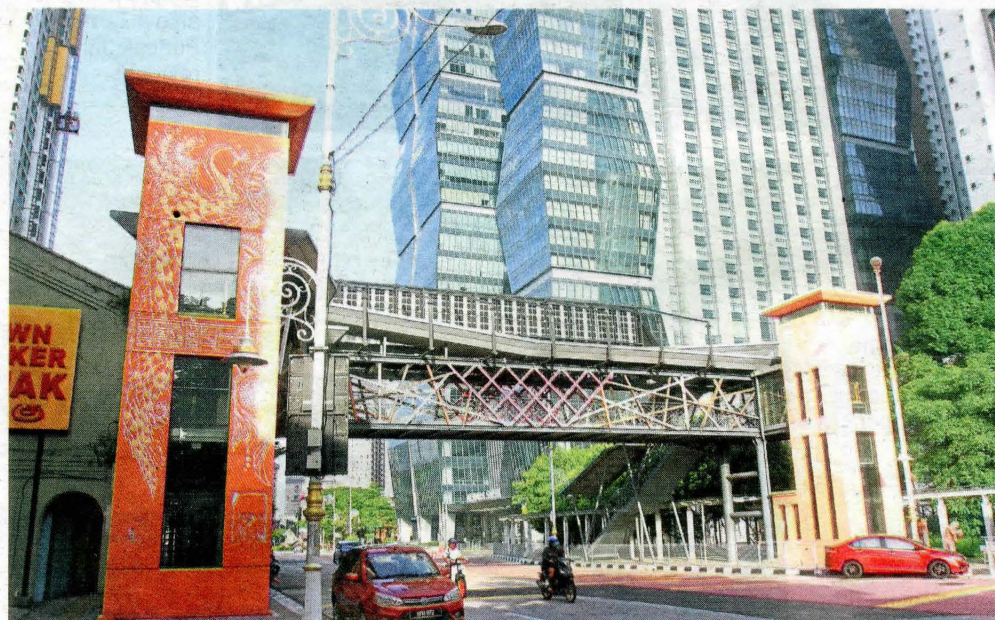
However, the bridges became white elephants, with stakeholders pushing DBKL to remove them.

The MAB bridge was demolished last month at a cost of RM300,000 following public complaints that it was unsafe and posed a threat to the blind community.

A second bridge — located at Wisma Harapan and connecting to SK (P) Methodist Brickfields in Jalan Tun Sambanthan 4 — which had also been considered for demolition, was spared but its lift shaft was removed.

Among the concerns raised about the MAB bridge include the placement of the structure, which posed a safety hazard, and difficulty faced by pedestrians using the bridge.

The stakeholders ask instead for a signalised pedestrian crossing equipped with a sound indicator, for the visually impaired.



DBKL has been urged to remove the lift shafts of this pedestrian bridge located along the Jalan Tun Sambanthan main road.
— CHAN TAK KONG/The Star



Source: DBKL

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