

TRAFFIC MATTERS

> There will be road closures and traffic diversions on Jalan SS7/26 and Jalan SS7/26a to facilitate pedestrian walkway upgrading work related to the LRT3 project, weekdays from 10am to 4pm until May 31.

> Motorcycle lanes will be diverted to emergency lanes on Shah Alam Expressway (SAE) at KM22.7 to KM23.1 and KM24.0 to KM24.3 (eastbound) and at KM24.3 to KM24 and KM23.1 to KM22.9 (westbound) until Feb 17. This is to facilitate work on the SAE Interchange of West Coast Expressway (Banting-Taiping).

CNY COLLECTORS MARKET

KL Collectors Market for Chinese New Year will be held on Feb 10 and 11, 10am to 9pm, at Central Piazza, KL Gateway Mall, Kuala Lumpur. It will feature a wide array of products ranging from pop culture toys, antiques, records, music memorabilia and collectibles to vintage clothing and sneakers.

MOBILE COUNTERS

Petaling Jaya City Council (MBPJ) will place mobile counters at several locations for residents to pay their assessment tax. The locations are SS24 Taman Megah next to the market (Feb 17 and 18), PJS 8, Desa Mentari (Feb 24 and 25) and Jalan SD 12/1, next to Petron petrol station (Feb 28 and 29), from 10am to 3pm for all locations. Additional counters will be open on weekends at MBPJ headquarters on Feb 17, 18, 24 and 25 from 10am to 2pm. For details, call 03-7956 3544 ext 102/103/108/109.

ASSESSMENT INCENTIVE

> Ipoh City Council (MBI) is having a lucky draw with prizes worth up to RM99,000 to encourage ratepayers to settle their assessment tax. To qualify, property owners must make payment before Feb 29, have no arrears and download the DMBI app. Payment can be made at MBI counters, post offices or online at www.mbi.gov.my, PBTPay or Jompay. For details, visit www.mbi.gov.my

> Ampang Jaya Municipal Council (MPAJ) is offering lucky draw prizes to ratepayers who settle their assessment before Feb 29. Prizes include motorcycles and home appliances. For details, visit www.mpa.gov.my

CHARITY EXHIBITION

Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR) Chinese Alumni Association Calligraphy and Painting Charity Exhibition will be held from Feb 24 to March 10, from 10am to 5pm, at Pro Art and Frame, Jalan 17/45, Petaling Jaya, Selangor to raise funds for Hospital Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman. The association is also appealing to UTAR alumni and artists from diverse backgrounds to participate and contribute to the event. Admission is free. For details, call 012-667 9228 (Alice) or 013-204 4229 (Wong).

CALL FOR DONATIONS

Badan Warisan Malaysia (BWM) is accepting donations of collectibles that are in good condition and can be sold such as paintings, porcelain and small furniture for its Collectibles Fair on March 2. The items are being collected only until Feb 24. For details, call at 03-2144 9273 (Syuhada or Natalie).

BOOK FEST

Kuala Lumpur Alternative Book Fest (KLAB) will be held from Feb 22 to 25 at Central Market Kuala Lumpur. For more, visit klabf.my

Facelift in phases for Chinatown

Petaling Street traders hope long-awaited changes will bring greater footfall, boost business

By JAROD LIM
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AFTER decades of neglect, Kuala Lumpur's iconic Petaling Street, fondly known as Chinatown, will finally get a much-needed facelift.

Over the years, the bustling cultural hub, renowned for its vibrant street markets and rich heritage, has suffered from having dilapidated infrastructure. Leaking roofs, torn awnings, broken pavements and ageing stalls with exposed wiring are among the many issues plaguing traders operating in the area.

Over five years, talks between stakeholders and Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) took place towards revitalising this historic thoroughfare and breathing new life into its storied lanes.

The facelift of Petaling Street is expected to begin after the Chinese New Year period.

Kuala Lumpur Hawkers and Petty Traders Association chairman Datuk Ang Say Tee said, "What's left is a few details to be ironed out and we expect a meeting soon with DBKL either this month or the next.

"The hawkers are welcoming the effort by DBKL as the last upgrade was more than 20 years ago.

"We hope this beautification will bring transformation to Chinatown."

In need of refurbishment

For years, conditions at Petaling Street have been a source of concern for locals and visitors alike.

Despite its undeniable charm and historical significance, Chinatown's deteriorating physical environment has become an



Kwok Chin says the Petaling Street facelift is timely ahead of Visit Malaysia Year 2025.

inconvenience to traders and reduced its potential as a tourist attraction.

"The roofs covering most of Petaling Street are leaking and water falls onto the road during a downpour.

"Some of the stalls are old, have wiring problems, and broken awnings pose a risk to both traders and visitors.

"There were also instances of flooding at the end of Petaling Street," Ang said.

He said the facelift would solve all the problems faced by traders.

According to Ang, the association had called for upgrading and beautification of Petaling Street in the early 1990s.

"It was only in 2001 that Petaling Street underwent a major facelift.

"The project was completed two years later.

"Two Chinese-style arches were built at the beginning and end of the road while blue polycarbonate roofing was installed to shelter traders from



the sun and rain."

It was reported in an English daily that the project cost RM11mil.

Since 2018, Ang said the association had been requesting an upgrade of Petaling Street facilities.

"After more than 10 meetings with DBKL and three Kuala Lumpur mayors, the beautification plans are finally underway," he said.

Ang also showed *StarMetro* DBKL's beautification plans, which included Chinese-inspired motifs and decorations as backdrop for the stalls.

"We understand that the entire project will likely take a year and will be done in four phases.

"This is so that traders operating along the street will not be affected for the entire year.

"However, they will still need to temporarily halt their operations for a short period to make way for the beautification project," he said.

Additional stalls proposed

Ang said the beautification plans, however, came with a catch.

"DBKL wanted to add about 100 new stall lots in front of existing stalls, which we objected strongly."

With 773 stalls already in Petaling Street, he said, "There is barely any room for additional stalls, so adding lots would make the street more cramped, making it difficult for visitors to shop.

"We fear that this will compromise visitors' comfort, thus driving them away.

"The addition of more stalls would also hamper access for fire and rescue vehicles into Petaling Street should a fire occur."

Ang said he had sent a letter to DBKL with members' objections and would bring this up again in the next meeting.

"The association also collected more than 600 signatures from



Cultural and historically, Petaling Street is a major draw for tourists.

— Photos: LOW BOON TAT/The Star

traders objecting to the additional stalls," he said.

Currently, stalls occupy the kerb in front of shoplots.

The proposed additional stalls would be placed in front of these existing stalls.

DBKL said in a statement that the status of the beautification project for the traders' area was still at design stage.

Part of the works included replacing existing kiosks with new ones featuring bigger roofs, replacing roofing with more vibrant fixtures, installing lights to emphasise building designs and replacing old wiring, it said.

"DBKL is committed to upgrading and beautifying the traders' area in Kuala Lumpur including Petaling Street to ensure they can operate in an organised and comfortable environment.

"We wish to remind traders to take care of the existing facilities for the benefit of all parties."

The local authority, however, did not disclose the allocation for the beautification project.

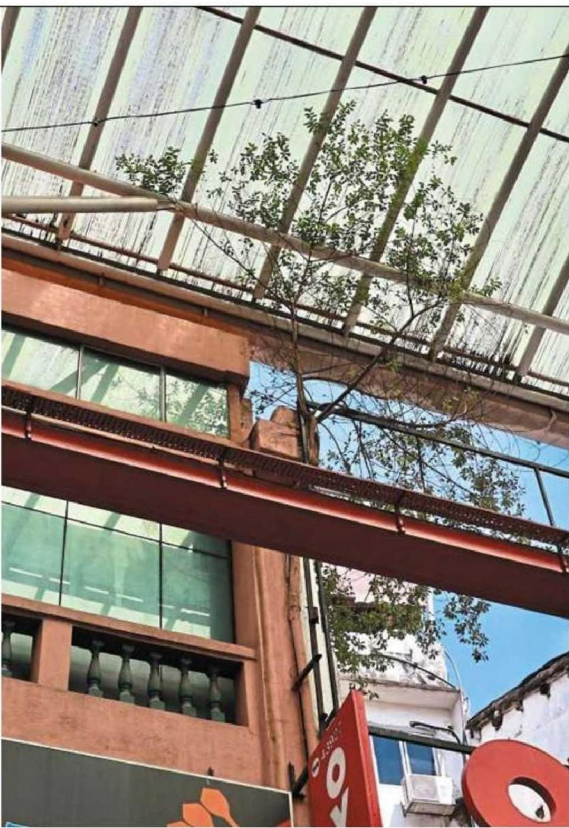
Stakeholders' feedback

Anticipation is mounting among Petaling Street stakeholders for the upcoming transformation.

Most business owners have voiced optimism, expressing hope that the facelift would not only enhance the area's aesthetic appeal but also attract greater foot traffic and revenue.

Petaling Street KRT chairman Datuk Chan Kwok Chin said the facelift was timely ahead of Visit Malaysia Year 2025.

"It's been a while since Petaling Street received upgrades.



The roof over Petaling Street leaks during rain while old decorations (right) need to be replaced.



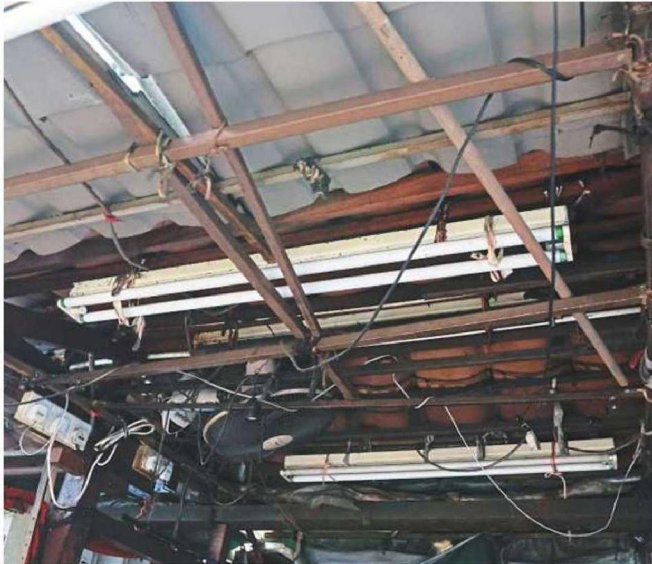
Upgrading works at Chinatown area including the roof are expected to start after Chinese New Year.



Ang (in red shirt) showing cracked tiles in Petaling Street alongside association treasurer Chan Pooi Chee (second from left) and a trader. (Right) Ang pointing out a stall's tattered cover.



Some traders in Petaling Street use canvas to protect people from the rain.



Old and exposed wiring in Chinatown poses a safety hazard.