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CONCERNS over risks posed by old billboards are being raised following the recent spate of thunderstorms in the city.

Kuala Lumpur residents fear that strong winds – which led to rooftops in Seri Petaling and Kampung Muhibbah PPR (people's housing project) in Kuala Lumpur being ripped off – could turn billboards into flying projectiles.

Roof debris from a previous storm wrecked 27 vehicles at a parking lot in PPR Kampung Muhibbah.

Residents in other parts of the city reached out to *StarMetro* to share photographs of billboards that had toppled during thunderstorms.

"A thunderstorm around 6pm on March 28 caused extensive damage," said KY Lim, a resident from Taman United.

"A large billboard situated along Jalan Gembira, before the former OUG Plaza building, partially collapsed.

"It was hanging on its hinges and was on the verge of toppling over at any moment," Lim said, adding that the billboard collapsed the following day.

S. Malar Devi, who lives in Jalan Kuchai Lama, said there were many old billboards located along the main road.

"Some still advertise events that have long passed," she said. "Shouldn't they be removed? Apart from being a safety hazard, they are also an eyesore."

When *StarMetro* visited Jalan Gembira, the collapsed billboard was still present on a hillside.

Some metal pieces that were part of the billboard were lying on the road.

Several other billboards and signboards in the area were either on the verge of toppling or had partially collapsed.

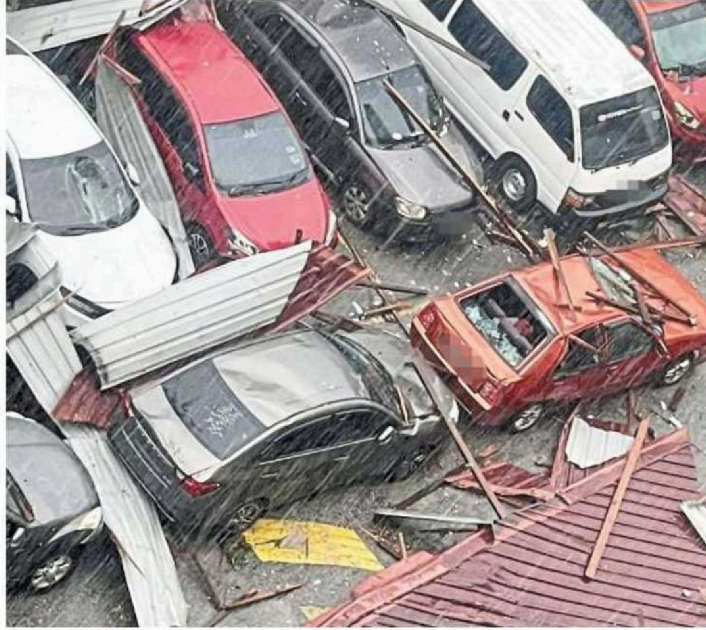
Many appeared faded and worn out, with only the steel structure remaining and no advertisements on them, while some featured events that had happened more than two years ago.

A Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) officer, from the Seputeh branch, who preferred to remain unnamed, said it was neither illegal nor wrong for billboards to display outdated advertisements in the city as it did not contravene the Advertisements (Federal Territory) 1982 by-laws.

He added that billboard contracts typically ran for three

# Fear of flying billboards during KL thunderstorms

## Outdoor structures pose danger, should be removed, say residents



Cars destroyed by debris following a recent thunderstorm at PPR Kampung Muhibbah.



The collapsed billboard at Jalan Gembira has yet to be removed. — Photos: YAP CHEE HONG/The Star



Residents want old billboards in the city removed as they pose a danger. Similar billboards are seen here in Jalah Megah Mendung, off Jalan Kelang Lama.

years, irrespective of whether the advertised event was over, as long as the permit was paid.

But residents say if the billboard is worn out and falling apart, the responsibility lies with the company to remove it.

"If thunderstorms can rip off rooftops and cause so much chaos, those billboards are a

tragedy waiting to happen," added Malar.

When contacted, DBKL executive director (Socio-Economic Development) Ismadi Sakirin said he would send a team to check the site and inform the billboard owner to either repair or remove the billboard.

"If they don't do it, we will

take appropriate action," said Ismadi.

It was previously reported that there are about 700 legal billboards in Kuala Lumpur, including free-standing (on-ground), on overhead pedestrian bridges, fly-over parapets, wall banners, sky signs, gantry ads, pillar wraps and LED ads.

However, industry sources have estimated the number of free-standing billboards in the city to be in the thousands.

Separately, in a statement to *StarMetro* regarding the thunderstorm that destroyed several rooftops in the city, DBKL said it had cleared the metal deck and detached wooden frames in the surrounding area following the March 28 thunderstorm at PPR Kampung Muhibbah.

It added that new metal decks would be ordered and iron roof frames fabricated.

DBKL noted that the affected units were still habitable and there was no need for relocation.

Funds would be provided to affected households, while owners of damaged vehicles could make claims at the DBKL office in the PPR, the authority said.

DBKL said repairs and restoration at Residensi Rimbunan Petaling in Seri Petaling, which was similarly affected by the storm, would fall under the jurisdiction of its Joint Management Body (JMB).