

PEDESTRIAN walkways and footpaths in the city, especially those with tactile blocks, should not be occupied by street vendors, says former Kuala Lumpur mayor Datuk Seri Nor Hisham Ahmad Dahlan.

“While the right to livelihood as claimed by street vendors is valid, Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) needs to balance that right with public safety and accessibility.

“As a former mayor, council president and district officer, I have been advocating for a safe and unobstructed passage for everyone – the visually impaired, the elderly, wheelchair users, mothers with baby strollers, and children.

“We should be moving towards turning Kuala Lumpur into a walkable city; hence public safety and accessibility must take precedence,” he stressed.

Nor Hisham said safe walkways were essential if DBKL wanted to move towards a world-class city.

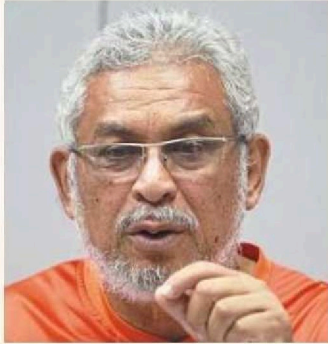
He said laws existed to ensure that rules, regulations, guidelines and policies on public walkways were implemented.

“DBKL’s Licensing and Business Development Department will only issue business licences to street vendors if the area is deemed suitable for business.

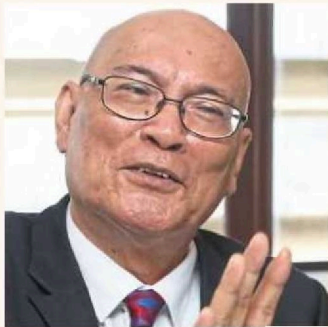
“This decision is made by a committee with representatives from other DBKL departments such as Urban Transport, Building Control, Project Implementation and Building Maintenance, Enforcement, and Economic Planning and Development,” he said.

He emphasised that the law

# Pedestrians’ right to use footpath must not be compromised, says former mayor



Khalid says DBKL should stick to their guidelines on hawker management.



Nor Hisham says street vendors should stay off pedestrian walkways.

was clear on this matter, and that by allowing traders to operate on pedestrian paths, it complicated the work of enforcement officers.

“We don’t want a situation where enforcement officers are unable to take action against a



stallowner who has a licence to operate on a footpath; that would be counter-productive,” he said.

On the other hand, DBKL enforcement officers told *StarMetro* that they were placed in a difficult position at times when enforcing the law on traders operating on footpaths and for putting chairs and tables on footpaths.

They say that the traders are not illegal and have a licence.

Some traders even produce support letters from politicians when questioned, further complicating matters.

“It also does not help when some of the traders publicise enforcement exercises on social media, making us look bad and

as if we are being cruel,” said a senior officer who declined to be named.

“In reality, traders are not supposed to be given licence to operate on public walkways and five-foot ways,” he added.

Former Federal Territories minister Khalid Abdul Samad said DBKL should stick to the guidelines and regulations with regard to traders operating on walk paths.

“DBKL must find suitable locations elsewhere for the traders.

“I understand that we want to support them too, to help them earn a living, but we cannot allow them to be putting chairs and tables, blocking pedestrians’ right of way, and

Enforcement officers say their work is made more difficult as some traders have obtained a licence to operate on public walkways.  
— Filepic

cooking on the sidewalk.

“The mayor has absolute power on policies and administration matters as per the Federal Capital Act 1960, and he can remedy the situation,” Khalid added.

DBKL advisory board member in charge of transportation and infrastructure, Hayatul Kamil Termudi said the street vendor situation in Kuala Lumpur had gone haywire since the Covid-19 pandemic when DBKL loosened its licensing guidelines to help poor city folk who had lost their incomes.

“But City Hall needs to get its act together and take control of the situation, before things get out of hand,” said Hayatul.

— By BAVANI M