



Festive bazaar's return to Masjid India lacks hype

Traders say not many are aware but there's still time to visit before Deepavali

By SHALINI RAVINDRAN
shaliniravindran@thestar.com.my

DEEPAVALI bazaar traders in Kuala Lumpur are hoping for a last-minute windfall from festive shoppers.

With the festival barely two weeks away, many bazaars have opened in traditional sites such as Brickfields and Masjid India.

Traders said they needed support from customers so that these bazaars will not die off.

When *StarMetro* visited the bazaar site in Jalan Bunus 6, off Jalan Masjid India on Saturday, only a handful of stalls had started operating.

They were selling colourful traditional clothing, costume jewellery, various types of Indian sweets and cookies as well as decorative items.

Trader R. Thanneswary is hoping more customers will start coming towards the end of this week.

She sells festive outfits and is operating for the first time in this location after having previously set up shop in Brickfields.

"We started setting up a few days ago, but business was slow and the rainy weather did not help.

"We really hope that people will shop here and support local traders," said Thanneswary who travels from Serdang each day to set up her stall.

She said that with better support, it would be possible to bring in more stall operators in the future.

Another trader selling decorative items, I. Suguna Devi, said she was publicising her stall through social media.

She said the current situation was a far cry from its heyday in the 1990s when there were hundreds of stalls operating at the bazaar.

"Not many people are aware that the Deepavali bazaar is back in Masjid India.

"There is still time, so please do come to the bazaar," she said.

Pertubuhan Kebajikan Peniaga Dan Penjaja Kecil Interaksi Kuala Lumpur dan Selangor, one of the organisers of this year's Deepavali bazaar in Masjid India, expects business to pick up closer to the festival.

Its chairman Sundraraj Marieppan said many did not know the festive bazaar was once again operating in Masjid India after a four-year break.

"This is a central location and we just need to give it some time," he said.

Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) stopped approving festive bazaars in Masjid India in 2018 following a string of issues including mismanagement, sub-letting of lots to others, poor sanitation and the involvement of middlemen.

Deepavali traders have been allowed back since last year, but only at Jalan Bunus 6.

Visitors to Masjid India told *StarMetro* that they were glad



After an absence of four years, the Deepavali bazaar is back in Masjid India albeit on a much smaller scale. — Photos: AZMAN GHANI/The Star



Thanneswary is anticipating more customers closer to Deepavali.

the Deepavali festive mood had returned to the popular shopping area.

Ampang resident Krishna Kumari said she was pleasantly surprised to see the bazaar back.

"It makes the place feel livelier and more vibrant."

Yogeswary Ramaiah said she still preferred physical shopping rather than purchasing online.

"One can still find good selections in places like Masjid India and Lebu Ampang."

In previous years, Deepavali bazaars were held in several areas in Kuala Lumpur, including Brickfields, Lebu Ampang, Lorong Tuanku Abdul Rahman and Masjid India.

This year, DBKL allocated 179 lots in Jalan Bunus 6 as well as

in Jalan Rakyat and Jalan Tun Sambanthan in Brickfields as well as Lebu Ampang.

This is a slight increase from last year, which saw only 110 lots allocated.

Shopowners in Brickfields and Lebu Ampang are allowed to carry out promotions outside their premises for a fee.

In a media statement, DBKL said the bazaars were coordinated by organisers that had applied to manage the sites.

"This year, DBKL has also made it mandatory for bazaar organisers to rent public parking bays if the sites are located in these areas," said the local authority.

The bazaars are operating until Nov 11, from 10am to midnight.



Suguna Devi is selling home decorative items.



Stalls have been set up along Jalan Bunus 6, selling festive items like Indian sweets.