

Feeling hemmed in

Residents near Taman Tasik Titiwangsa in Kuala Lumpur are fed up with the activities of traders operating illegally as well as inconsiderate motorists while the apparent lack of action by the authorities adds to their frustrations.



Surrounded by stalls: The view from a resident's house in Jalan Kuantan, opposite Taman Tasik Titiwangsa Kuala Lumpur, showing the proximity of stalls and inconsiderate parking by motorists. — GRACE CHEN/The Star

By GRACE CHEN
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PEOPLE go to a public park expecting a peaceful environment but that is not the case for visitors to Taman Tasik Titiwangsa.

Rented bicycles and electric "tuktuk" trundling headlong at oncoming traffic as well as rogue motorcyclists revving their engines at night are common outside the park along Jalan Kuantan, Kuala Lumpur.

Residents who stay directly opposite it have to put up with traffic congestion, traders occupying parking bays and inconsiderate motorists who park anywhere they please.

Resident Monicka Rajaindren said there was ample parking around the park but drivers had taken to parking their cars on walkways and roadsides.

"They park on both sides of a narrow lane leading to my house.

"We are unable to exit or enter our own residences," she said.

"I have had many heated arguments with these vehicle owners," said Monicka.

"What if there is an emergency? How will an ambulance or fire engine reach us?"

She added that some motorists also had no qualms about making a U-turn right in front of her house.

Facing the same problem are Haslinda Dol Hamid and Norjaiton Husin, who run an all-girls shelter home in Jalan Kuantan.

They have to drop off the home's occupants at the entrance to the lane and the latter have to walk 100m because their van is unable to drive in.

"When one of our residents told a motorist that his vehicle was blocking us from

exiting the house, he said he would not take long but only returned an hour later," said Norjaiton.

Residents have voiced their displeasure with the authorities for allowing hawkers to occupy parking spaces there but to no avail.

A check by *StarMetro* showed no fewer than 20 hawkers at the location, some of them operating from the boot of private cars and four-wheel drives.

Services and products like bicycles and electric scooters for hire as well as food like sushi, *kunafa*, *tongmo*, *keropok lekor* and *apam balik* were available.

Although some of the hawkers are illegal, others are licensed to trade at different spots in the city including Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman but have decided to do business in this park's vicinity instead.

A resident, Datuk Ramesh Kodammal,

said those living opposite the park had been inconvenienced by these hawkers who operated right in front of the people's homes every day.

"The stalls started last year and their numbers have been expanding ever since.

"Customers who stop their vehicles to buy from them cause traffic congestion along the road.

"There are days when it takes us more than 20 minutes just to travel one kilometre," said Ramesh.

Residents also fear bad hats may frequent the stalls pretending to be customers, to stake out the area.

Houseowner Datuk M. Ramanathan SM Meyyappan said he and his family were forced to move out of their home of 11 years.

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DBKL to take stern action against bike rental operators

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He and his wife, Annam Ramanathan, have been staying in Petaling Jaya for two years and have rented out their house in Jalan Kuantan.

"My tenant has complained that a burger stall is operating right in front of the house," he said, adding that Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) should not allow any traders there.

"Taman Tasik Titiwangsa is a major tourist attraction, so trading activities should be held in an organised and regulated manner," Ramanathan stressed.

Ajit Singh, who is a frequent visitor to the area, said the situation was getting worse by the day.

"Mat rempit will rev their engines loudly, not caring if it's late at night," he complained.

He said the rented bicycles and electric scooters were a safety hazard.

"These electric scooters often overtake double-parked cars and I have had three near misses with them.

"They pose a danger to themselves and pedestrians, besides slowing down traffic for other motorists," said Ajit.

The scooters have been modified to resemble a tuktuk, and are not allowed on the park grounds.

When contacted, DBKL said it was aware of the situation in

Jalan Kuantan.

"Our enforcement team frequently monitors the area, especially on weekends to ensure hawkers abide by regulations," said DBKL in a statement.

The local authority said it had confiscated the equipment of six hawkers between January and September under the 2016 Federal Territories of Kuala Lumpur Hawker Licensing by-laws, with two notices issued to offenders.

Its enforcement personnel also conducted seven operations during the same period to remove obstructions along Jalan Kuantan.

DBKL said discussions were held with Taman Tasik Titiwangsa traders on the presence of bicycle and scooter rental operators in the area.

The operators were ordered to move to a new location by DBKL but they had not complied as they said it was not conducive.

"We have verbally reprimanded the bicycle and scooter rental service operators for their refusal to comply.

"If they continue to disobey the order, stern action will be taken against them," said DBKL.

Though bicycles are allowed, the Road Transport Department has reiterated that electric scooters are prohibited on public roads.

They are only permitted in gazetted places such as playgrounds and shopping centres.

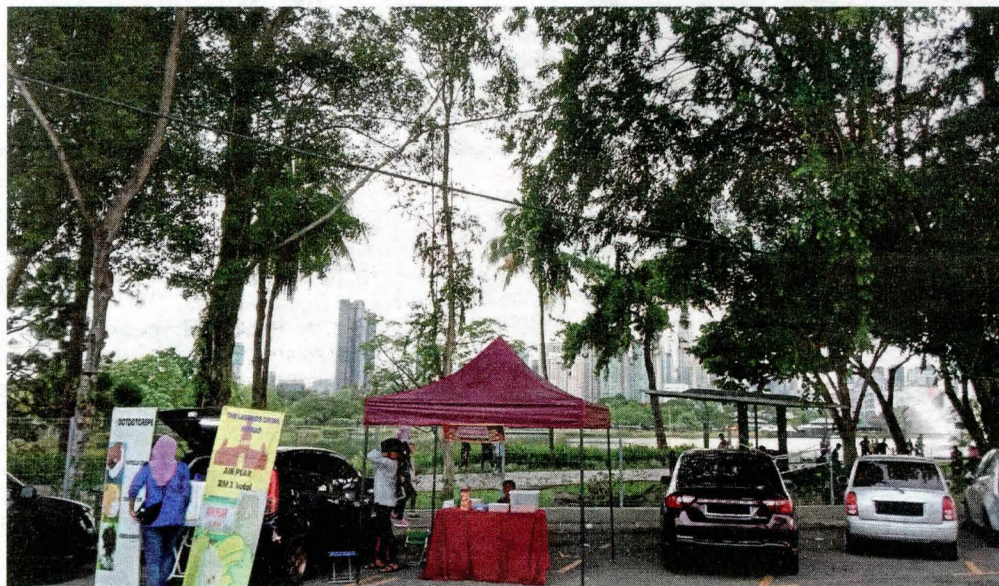


Escooters modified into 'tuktuks' are being rented out to visitors outside Taman Tasik Titiwangsa. (Bottom) Inconsiderate motorists who block the gates of residential properties, have prompted the operators of a welfare home to put up a "no parking" sign.

On Dec 25, 2021, *StarMetro* had highlighted the problem faced by visitors who were unable to find parking at the Titiwangsa Lake park as the majority of bays had been taken up by illegal traders.

On Sept 24 last year, Setiawangsa MP Nik Nazmi Nik Ahmad organised a press conference to relay the frustration of Taman Titiwangsa Residents Association with the situation. He had urged DBKL to find a suitable location for the traders.

One year on, it looks like the situation has not changed for the better but has become worse instead.



Traders taking up parking bays along Jalan Kuantan meant for visitors to Taman Tasik Titiwangsa. (Right) The many stalls lining the road, offering products and services. — Photos: FAIHAN GHANI and GRACE CHEN/The Star