

MAYOR: KUALA LUMPUR IS SAFE

She says City Hall will only consider areas unsafe if studies provide evidence

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KUALA Lumpur Mayor Datuk Seri Maimunah Mohd Sharif has eased fears about structural safety in the nation's capital following the appearance of a sinkhole in Jalan Masjid India that swallowed a woman on Friday.

"In my view, Kuala Lumpur remains safe," she said at a press conference yesterday.

"We will only consider it unsafe if studies provide evidence to the contrary, despite the alarming media reports," she said in response to a claim on social media that the city was the most unsafe place in the country, with the potential for a "giant sinkhole" to occur any time.

Maimunah said Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) had mobilised a task force, including the police, Fire and Rescue Department, Civil Defence Department and the Minerals and Geoscience Department, to assess the safety of the area.

"However, I have set up a task force... to further review and investigate this area. The task force has already been activated and will proceed to work as quickly as possible," she said.



Kuala Lumpur Mayor Datuk Seri Maimunah Mohd Sharif addressing a press conference on the third day of the search-and-rescue operation for a woman who fell into the sinkhole in Jalan Masjid India on Friday.

PIC BY AZIAH AZMEE

She also said that DBKL was supporting the victim's family with accommodation, meals and counselling services.

The victim, Vijayaletchumi, 48, an Indian national, fell into the sinkhole on Friday and has not been found.

Maimunah said that the police would coordinate with the Indian High Commission to extend the visas of Vijayaletchumi's family members, who are currently in the country.

Her husband and eldest son are reported to be here, and they have been kept informed about the search-and-rescue efforts.

The operation will continue until she is located.

Dang Wangi police chief Assistant Commissioner Sulizmie Afendy Sulaiman confirmed that the authorities had yet to determine the full extent of the search.

"We had a meeting earlier chaired by the mayor. We will persist with the search-and-rescue operation until the victim is found," he said.

When asked if he had spoken with the victim's family members, Sulizmie confirmed that he had spoken with them.

"Yes, the family members are key witnesses, especially those who were with the victim (during the incident).

"According to the information I have, during the incident, the vic-

tim's sibling was walking ahead, and when the victim fell, the sibling went to check but could not see her at all," he said.

Indah Water Konsortium (IWK) will carry out "flushing" operations in the Pantai Dalam sewerage system to aid in locating the victim.

Maimunah said yesterday that the rescue team was searching in manhole five (Agro Bank Lebuah Pasar) and manhole six (Jalan Kinabalu).

"The Fire and Rescue Department is also conducting searches at the end point, which is the IWK Pantai Dalam plant."

"Additionally, IWK will carry out flushing work downstream

and they have a complete mapping of the area. They have also agreed to conduct an integrity test in this area," she said.

At the press conference were Sulizmie, Kuala Lumpur Fire and Rescue Department deputy director Rozihan Anwar Mamat and IWK chief executive officer Narendran Maniam.

Rozihan said the re-inspection at manholes five and six was necessary due to slow water currents.

However, he said the inspection that was completed at 5.30pm yielded negative results.

"Based on yesterday's (Saturday's) findings after inspecting all six manholes, we found that (water current) in manholes five and six was slow.

"This might be due to blockages or debris. We re-inspected the area to ensure that both manholes had nothing obstructing them," he said.

On Saturday night, the authorities had finished inspecting all six manholes from Jalan Masjid India to the sewerage pond in Pantai Dalam.

The authorities were searching along a 7km sewage line, which was accessible from the six manholes. One rescue personnel in full protective equipment was sent in to avoid the danger posed by toxic gases from the sewer.

The six manholes were located in front of Wisma Yakin, in Jalan Melayu, at the Jalan Melayu intersection, in Dataran Merdeka, near Bank Pertanian Lebuah Pasar and in Bulatan Kinabalu.

Page 1 pic: Policemen and Kuala Lumpur City Hall personnel standing near the sinkhole in Jalan Masjid India yesterday.