



Chew (right) and Yuesnaedy looking at the site for phase three of the Pasar Raja Bot redevelopment in Chow Kit, Kuala Lumpur.

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KL market makeover misses the mark

TRADERS at Kompleks Raja Bot in Chow Kit, Kuala Lumpur, have been grappling with numerous unresolved issues since it opened in March this year.

From inadequate water supply to vacant stalls, these problems have severely impacted their operations.

Kompleks Raja Bot represents the second of a four-phase redevelopment project for Pasar Raja Bot, with a total investment of RM177.5mil

The first phase, completed in 2016, introduced a roofed structure for the vegetable and fruit market.

Phase three is expected to include a similar building next to Kompleks Raja Bot, while phase four will feature a multi-storey carpark.

Both of these phases will be constructed within the vicinity of Pasar Raja Bot.

Raja Bot traders urge City Hall to fix design flaws at new complex before shoppers vanish for good



Small fridges on the lower ground floor. The area is not suitable as a cold room because it is located in the middle of the building, say traders.

Reluctant to move

Nearly six months since its opening, some traders still refuse to move into the new complex.

At a glance, only a handful of stalls in the wet market section on the ground floor are in operation.

According to traders, the old market — comprising zones 1A, 1B and 1E, located next to the vegetable and fruit market along Jalan Raja Alang — continues to attract more customers.

They believe customers are still more familiar with the old market.

Committee members from Persatuan Penjaja-Penjaja dan Peniaga-Peniaga Kecil Kawasan Chow Kit had previously expressed concerns about the lack of publicity by the authorities.

Not enough was done to inform the public about the new market, which the traders said made them reluctant to move into the new complex.

"That might change now, as traders have been ordered by the authorities to relocate to the new market," said association chairman Yuesnaedy Idrus.

"Those still hesitant may receive a notice from Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL)."

"So far, only 40% have moved into the complex with most of them being food hawkers," he said.

On Aug 6, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Federal Territories), Dr Zaliha Mustafa, made an unannounced visit to the market.

In a social media post following the visit, she stated authorities would enforce action against those who had not relocated to the new market complex.

In a two-minute and 17-second TikTok video, she urged traders to fully utilise the modern three-storey market complex by moving in promptly.

"The department has received numerous complaints, one of which is that traders have not yet moved into their allocated spaces."

"This has resulted in the complex struggling to attract customers."

"We will continue to monitor the actions taken by all relevant agencies to ensure that the facilities are optimised," she added.

New problems emerge

StarMetro highlighted in multiple reports in May and June that the market complex had been plagued by various issues.

Besides the lack of awareness, the market complex has inadequate water supply due to low pressure.

This is due to broken water pipes with repairs expected to take six months.

Currently, at least five water tankers are deployed to top up the water tanks at the complex every day.

Yuesnaedy said while these problems were yet to be resolved, new issues had arisen.

"Last month, dirty water started flowing out from the pipes on the lower ground floor of the complex, emitting a foul stench."

"We are unsure of the source of the water, but it has created an unpleasant environment for traders who use the area to store some of their items."

"The water was cleared once by contractors, but after a few days, the problem returned," he said.

Yuesnaedy added that the lower ground floor of the complex would flood during a downpour.

"The water can rise as high as half a foot, leaving the walls stained by floodwaters."



Chicken traders operating at the wet market in Kompleks Raja Bot.

"Traders sometimes have to wade through the water to continue their operations," he said.

Yuesnaedy is concerned that if these problems persist, it would drive away traders before the complex is fully occupied.

"Four stalls at the food court have already closed down because they couldn't cover the cost of rent with so few customers."

"Parking is also a problem here, and we are waiting for phase four of the Pasar Raja Bot redevelopment to be completed," he said.

A dried goods seller, who wished to be known only as Oh, said there were very few customers in the complex.

"On a bad day, I make only RM20, and I don't know how long I can sustain the business."

"I hope the authorities can encourage the remaining traders to move into the complex soon," she said.

Future development woes

The previous transit markets 1C and 1G, located next to the current complex, have been demolished to make way for phase three of the Pasar Raja Bot market redevelopment.

Among them are meat and fish traders as well as those selling dried goods, flowers and other items.

Some of these traders have moved away, while others are operating temporarily in other areas of the market.

This new phase will feature a market building similar to the existing Raja Bot complex to accommodate these remaining traders.

Association secretary Chew Meng Leong wants DBKL to review the building's design.

"Some of the facilities and structural elements of the market complex are not favourable to traders."

"For instance, some trading lots don't have water supply, forcing traders to get water from other locations."

"The alley designated for loading and unloading goods is



Oh hopes other traders can be encouraged to move into the complex.

too narrow, and some stalls are obstructed by the building's facade.

"For example, we initially thought that the row of stores facing Jalan Raja Alang would be a prime location."

"But concrete barriers that were erected in front of the stores are blocking the storefront."

"Meanwhile, those facing the vegetable and fruit market are doing better because customers who visit the market can easily see the stores from the ground level," he said.

Chew suggested that the ground floor in phase three of the market complex be opened up to make the new building more visible to the public.

"Additionally, the design should consider spaces for 'cold rooms' where traders can refrigerate their goods."

"Although the lower ground level of the Raja Bot complex has designated spaces for a 'cold room,' they are unsuitable."

"The allocated spaces are in the middle of the building, which prevents traders from installing compressors outside."

"Installing compressors inside the building would cause the entire floor to heat up," he said. Yuesnaedy hopes that DBKL



Yuesnaedy says new issues have emerged at the complex.

would seriously look into the matter and address the problems faced by traders.

"Delays in addressing these problems would drive away not only customers but also traders."

"Customers are already dwindling here. We hope the authorities will assist us as soon as possible," he said, adding that he had planned to write to DBKL to waive the stalls' rental for at least a year.

DBKL had not responded at press time to queries from StarMetro on the matter.



A trader roasting peanuts has resorted to various ways to channel the heat from the oven to other areas as the shoplots are not equipped with cooking hoods.



Kompleks Raja Bot traders going about their daily routine.



A worker collecting coconuts at the lower ground level which traders say is not a suitable storage space.