

# City Hall cancels National Day celebrations at Dataran Merdeka over sinkhole tragedy

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The 2024 Merdeka Eve celebration organised by Kuala Lumpur City Hall, scheduled to take place today at Dataran Merdeka, has been cancelled.

It announced the cancellation in a post on its Facebook page, citing respect for the sinkhole tragedy victim and the recent appearance of a second sinkhole as reasons for the decision.

The public is encouraged to appreciate the meaning of National Day by expressing their patriotism in other ways, it said.

In the sinkhole incident last Friday along Jalan Masjid India, a 48-year-old Indian woman tourist

named as Vijayaletchumy fell into an eight-metre hole as she was walking toward a temple in the area.

City Hall also informed the public that the Fire and Rescue Department team has entered the sewage channel upstream from the sewage tunnel at Wisma Yakin.

Manual shoring (a temporary support system) and excavation work were also underway.

The search, using ground penetrating radar by the Mineral and Geoscience Department, has been ongoing for a week.

On Wednesday, Jalan Masjid India was closed to all vehicles after the second sinkhole was discovered near a police post, just 50m from the

first sinkhole.

A survey found that more business premises around the location were closed as police cordoned off the entire length of Jalan Masjid India with yellow tape to ensure public safety.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof, who visited the site, announced that the government will conduct an integrity audit of the entire utility system in Jalan Masjid India once the search and rescue operations are concluded.

He emphasised that the inspection is necessary to ensure public safety and determine the cause of the sinkholes in the area.

Meanwhile, Fire and Rescue Department deputy director-general (Operations) Datuk Ahmad Izram Osman said his team detected an obstacle, possibly an object, stuck between the clear land location and the second sewage tunnel approximately 80m from the site.

The findings were obtained through two Detection Unit (K9) dogs, Denti and Frankie, as well as camera footage.

Following the detection of the object, water and sewage were pumped out while eight divers, assisted by 75 rescue crew members managing machinery and logistics, continued the search efforts.

– Bernama