

Sinkhole investigation to be wrapped up soon

THE investigation into the incident involving Indian tourist G. Vijaya Lakshmi, who disappeared into a sinkhole in Jalan Masjid India on Aug 23 and is presumed dead, is nearing completion.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Federal Territories) Dr Zaliha Mustafa said the full investigation results were under review by several agencies, including the incident commander, the Dang Wangi police chief, the Federal Territories Department and Kuala Lumpur City Hall.

"The geotechnical assessment is ongoing, utilising technologies such as ground-penetrating radar and microgravity testing to ensure soil stability in high-risk areas, including the central business district of Kuala Lumpur. This assessment is crucial for identifying locations that may still be susceptible to sinkholes.

"Both reports will be presented to the cabinet first," she said in response to P. Prabakaran (PH-Batu), who asked for an update on the sinkhole incident in Jalan Masjid India. He also inquired whether the government would release the report to the public.

Dr Zaliha gave her assurances that the government was committed to transparency in all investigations, particularly those involving public safety.

Regarding compensation for

the family of the late Vijaya Lakshmi, she said the government, through City Hall, had contributed RM30,000 and private donors had provided RM10,000.

Meanwhile, Dr Zaliha said Jalan Masjid India had been declared safe for all activities.

She said this was based on the studies conducted by the special task force chaired by Kuala Lumpur mayor Datuk Seri Dr Maimunah Mohd Sharif.

"This (decision) was reached after considering the collective expertise of various agencies, including the police, the Fire and Rescue Department, the Public Works Department, the Minerals and Geoscience Department, as well as professional organisations, such as the Institution of Engineers Malaysia and the Malaysian Geotechnical Society."

Dr Zaliha said several immediate short-term actions had been implemented.

"An integrity audit of utility assets has been conducted by utility companies in the central business district, including in Jalan Masjid India. Mapping and underground integrity testing have been carried out to detect weaknesses in older assets."

As for long-term actions, Dr Zaliha said City Hall would implement in-depth soil investigations using deep boring techniques and laboratory testing to ensure soil stability.