

Locals stew over illegal food court

Hawkers may be moved to planned multi-storey carpark in Desa Sri Hartamas, KL

Story and photos by LEW GUAN XI
lewguanxi@thestar.com.my

DESPITE being deemed illegal, a food court at Jalan Sri Hartamas 22 is still in operation, to the dismay of residents and traders in Desa Sri Hartamas, Kuala Lumpur.

Besides being built without proper approval, Desa Sri Hartamas Owners and Traders Association (DSHOTA) president Abu Bakar Ibrahim said its cleanliness was not up to the mark.

“A clean eatery that meets public health standards must have proper grease traps, filtration and drainage systems.

“However, the food court on Jalan Sri Hartamas 22 doesn’t have these infrastructures.

“I have also received complaints from traders and residents who have seen rats the size of cats there.

“The authorities should not approve the development of eateries that do not fulfil hygiene standards,” he said.

In January last year, Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) found that licences of 19 of the stalls in the food court had expired.

They also found that the lane behind the food court was dirty and needed monitoring, while the rubbish collection point was

not well managed.

In a letter to DSHOTA dated Jan 17, 2023, DBKL confirmed that the food court had been built without approval.

Subsequently, after calls for action by DSHOTA, DBKL in a letter in March last year stated that the food court had violated Section 2(1)(a) of the Federal Territory (Planning) Act 1982 for building structures and conducting trading activities without a development order.

DBKL also said the food court’s operating licence would not be continued starting this year.

A letter by Federal Territories of Kuala Lumpur Lands and Mines Office on March 1 ordered the food court’s owner to vacate the site following the discontinuation of its operating licence.

However, a check by *StarMetro* earlier this month found it was business as usual at the food court. The situation remained the same yesterday.

Kuala Lumpur advisory board member Andre Lai said a multi-storey carpark might be built on the site, with one floor being reserved for traders.

He said this decision, if implemented, would be a “win-win solution” for all.

“I hope this move doesn’t create any perception that DBKL



The food court that is operating illegally.

is giving in to the demand of certain groups.

“It is always the government’s will to support the hawker culture.

“However, one must remember that there are always guidelines and by-laws that every trader must obey,” said Lai.

Abu Bakar agreed with the carpark building idea as long as the hawkers were prohibited from placing their stalls on the streets.

“Operating the stalls on the street would cause problems such as congested traffic and clogged drains,” he said.

However, DSHOTA vice-president Linda See opposed the idea of placing the hawkers in a multi-storey building.

“Waste management and logistics will be a problem if a hawker centre is on the upper floors of the building,” she said.

She called for DBKL to reclaim a piece of land in the commercial area that was sold to a developer, and build the new hawker centre there.

Nevertheless, See said the carpark could alleviate traffic congestion on Desa Sri Hartamas roads as fewer motorists might resort to parking illegally.

At press time, DBKL had not responded to queries regarding the matter.



(Above) Congested lane behind the food court.



(Left) Filthy drain at the food court is a health hazard.