

Explain or else...

After 13 years, City Hall says licence does not meet requirements

By KHARLEEZ ZUBIN

alkharleez@mmail.com.my

RESTAURANT owner N. Sugumaran, 41, was forced to sell his Mercedes Benz car and exchange it for a weather beaten Proton Saga for RM2,000 because his business has been badly hit and his debts are mounting.

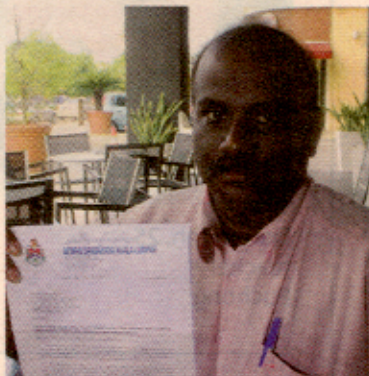
Not that the global economic downturn has taken a toll on his once flourishing Ayre Restaurant in Palm Court Condominium, like what many other businesses are experiencing. But his bane is the Joint Management Body (JMB) which he claims is out to drive him and others operating there out of business.

Sugumaran has now been slapped with a notice by City Hall's Licensing Department asking him to explain why his restaurant licence of 13 years should not be cancelled.

He claims that City Hall is forced to act due to JMB's insistence.

Sugumaran claims his restaurant has lost more than RM100,000 in business since the JMB took over last year and started imposing "unjustified" house rules like preventing outsiders from frequenting his premises.

The City Hall notice, dated July 17,



BLEAK FUTURE: Sugumaran is in a fix after receiving a notice from City Hall threatening to cancel his restaurant licence

and signed by Zulkifi Muhammad of the Licensing Department, now says the licence issued to Sugumaran some 13 years ago does not fulfil certain criteria under the Planning Department.

"When I applied for the licence, they asked for all the relevant documents and I complied. Now after issuing the licence more than a decade ago, they are telling me I have failed to comply with the licensing requirements. It's ridiculous," said Sugumaran who runs a vegetarian restaurant at one of the

16 commercial units.

So far two shops have been closed after being badly hit by rules and regulations the JMB imposed.

"Our troubles started when the new JMB took over last year and closed the gate to the condominium and placed a guard to keep outsiders from frequenting my restaurant," said Sugumaran, who may not only go out of business if the slide in business continues but may also face a bankruptcy suit for unsettled loans.

When Deputy Federal Territories Minister Datuk M. Saravanan was asked why City Hall initiated action when a suit filed by the JMB over the legality of the shoplots was still in the High Court, he said he was not aware and would check with the local authority.

"As far as I know, there was a suit to determine whether the shoplots were part of the common area or belonged to the developer," he said.

Two weeks ago, the JMB failed in its High Court bid to prevent the transfer of the three titles to the commercial units from the director of Global Resources Sdn Bhd, O. K. Wong, who died early this year, to his wife. Global Resources is also the developer of the condominium.