



A section of Jalan Masjid India, which had been closed following a sinkhole incident in August, was reopened to the public on Tuesday. NSTP PIC BY HAIRUL ANUAR RAHIM

**'STREET IS SAFE AGAIN'**

# MASJID INDIA TRADERS HOPE SHOPPERS RETURN

August sinkhole incident caused business to plunge drastically

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**T**RADERS in Jalan Masjid India here are urging shoppers to return, assuring them that the area is safe, months after a sinkhole disrupted the bustling shopping district.

The shopping destination, known for its vibrant atmosphere and mix of domestic and international visitors, fell silent after the sinkhole incident.

The incident not only instilled fear in the public but also caused a decline in sales, leaving traders struggling.

A check by the *New Straits Times* in Jalan Masjid India showed that only a few Malaysians were present, with most shoppers being foreigners.

Hayati Hamzah, 60, who works at a fabric store, said many people remained hesitant to return, worried about their safety.

"People are cautious, but I have seen the efforts made by the authorities to address the issue."

"I am confident that Jalan Masjid India is safe again," she told the NST.

Hayati urged shoppers to support businesses that relied on the street's buzz.

"Trust needs to be rebuilt. I understand that people want to be careful, but I appeal to everyone, please come back and shop here. We need your support."

"Especially with Ramadan just around the corner."

"If the repairs are not fully completed by then, it will impact us even more."

"This is the time when people come here to shop for festive essentials."

She said the lack of customers was understandable given the fear surrounding the incident.

"I am still traumatised by what happened."

"The road where the sinkhole occurred is part of my route to the shop."

"It would be a lie to say I'm not affected. I'm still afraid and avoid using that road."

Another trader, who wished to be known only as Nora, 36, called on the government and authorities, including City Hall, to take steps to revive the street.

Nora said everyone needed to play their part to get people to return to the area.

"The trauma people feel is still there."

"Previously, customers refused

to come in and would rather request delivery or pick-up in alternative locations.

"No one trusted the safety of this area, and that cost us many customers and sales," she said.

She added that the incident had left traders in a dire situation, with some employees being placed on unpaid leave due to the lack of income.

However, Nora said, the reopening of the area on Tuesday had given them renewed hope for recovery.

"We hope things will improve from now on, and that the situation will go back to how it used to be."

"Imagine how bad it has been. There were days when making RM50 in sales was a struggle. Sometimes, we barely made RM13, while rents here cost thousands."

On Tuesday, the section of Jalan Masjid India, which had been closed following a sinkhole incident in August, was reopened to the public.

Mayor Datuk Seri Dr Maimunah Mohd Sharif said the reopening was made possible after the restoration and repair work was completed ahead of schedule, which was set for next month.

The incident on Aug 23 saw Indian tourist G. Vijaya Lakshmi, 48, go missing after falling into an 8m-deep sinkhole that opened beneath her.