



A fruit stall occupying the entire pavement corner, forcing pedestrians to walk on the road.

(Far left) A cluttered five-foot way obstructed by stacked goods. — Photos: YAP CHEE HONG/ The Star

# DBKL mulls free-movement zones to reclaim public walkways

By **BAVANI M and SHALINI RAVINDRAN**  
metro@thestar.com.my

PEDESTRIAN walkways and five-foot ways in Kuala Lumpur may soon be gazetted as free-movement zones, as authorities intensify efforts to reclaim public spaces from businesses and unlicensed traders.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Federal Territories) Datuk Seri Dr Zaliha Mustafa said the move was part of a broader initiative to ensure pedestrian infrastructure remained accessible, particularly for persons with disabilities and the visually impaired.

"Alfresco dining has become a popular trend in our community, but we must ensure that it is not carried out at the expense of pedestrian safety and accessibility," she told *StarMetro*.

Dr Zaliha said some regulation was necessary, suggesting that the placement of tables and chairs on public walkways might be restricted to specific hours or disallowed entirely in designated areas.

"I urge operators to cooperate and the public to support these efforts.

"Everyone must play a role in preserving the city's walkability," she added.

Her remarks follow *StarMetro's* article on April 7 titled "Dining in the street," which highlighted how eateries and traders were increasingly converting public walkways into private dining areas or makeshift stalls.

Meanwhile, Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) has been given until August to complete its roadside stall whitelisting exercise.



Dr Zaliha says everyone must play a role in preserving the city's walkability.

Dr Zaliha said the whitelisting of unlicensed traders exercise was a step towards regulating roadside stalls through proper licensing and accurate data.

Emphasising fairness and

rule-based governance, she said all businesses must be licensed to ensure justice and order in the city.

Kuala Lumpur mayor Datuk Seri Maimunah Mohd Sharif said DBKL was working on a structured whitelisting framework to assess which unlicensed traders might be allowed to continue operating.

However, she emphasised that this was not a blanket legalisation exercise.

"We are not handing out automatic approvals," she said.

"The whitelist will be guided by zoning criteria, the nature of the activity and legal compliance.

"If a location is unsuitable, it will not be considered."

She said applications might be reviewed by parliamentary zones and hotspots identified for further scrutiny.

An online system may also be introduced to ease the application process.

But Maimunah cautioned that permit application did not mean guaranteed approval.

"We don't want people to get the idea that this is a free for all.

"Suitability and adherence to the law are central to the success of an application."

Maimunah also reminded temporary licence holders that they were prohibited from installing permanent infrastructure at their stalls.

"There must be no structures, fridges, fans, gas tanks, TVs nor coolers. And no tables and chairs either.

"These are permits for street trading, not mini restaurants.

"We are clearing up and clearing out. This is not about penalising the poor, it's about maintaining order."