

Reconsider Desa Pandan road-widening project, City Hall told

KUALA LUMPUR: Titiwangsa member of parliament Datuk Seri Johari Abdul Ghani has urged City Hall to reconsider its road-widening project in Desa Pandan here, which has drawn criticism due to the demolition of nine hawker stalls.

He said the affected traders, many of whom had valid licences and had operated there for over a decade, were caught off guard when City Hall personnel arrived unannounced to clear the site.

"These are legal traders earning a living. Without proper notice, their stalls are being torn down. That's unacceptable," he said after meeting the hawkers recently.

Johari, who is plantation and

commodities minister, questioned the rationale behind the widening of what he described as an inner road, as there were 60 more stalls just 100m ahead.

"It makes no sense to clear this section only to have the road narrow again shortly after. City Hall must review this. If a contractor has been appointed, assign them to a different project while we resolve this matter."

He also cited safety concerns, noting that a shortcut near the stalls had seen multiple accidents involving heavy vehicles.

"Just last week, a lorry got stuck on this narrow road. Instead of addressing the misuse, City Hall wants to widen the road

at the expense of licensed hawkers. That's not logical."

Johari added that he had not been informed of the demolition proceeding despite earlier discussions and site visits.

"Fifty-six officers came without notice to demolish the stalls. Traders were told to vacate by July 15, and their licences were not renewed earlier this year.

"If City Hall insists on going ahead, I want the decision in writing so that I can escalate it to Federal Territories Minister Datuk Seri Dr Zaliha Mustafa."

City Hall said the clearance was carried out according to procedure. It said the project went through multiple engagement

sessions and formal notifications.

Business licences for the affected nine stalls were revoked on Jan 10, with official notices issued five days later instructing traders to vacate the sites.

A site clearance notice was issued on July 4, with the demolition initially scheduled for July 9 but postponed due to public unrest.

The controversy escalated after a video went viral showing a man threatening City Hall personnel with a parang during the operation. The 43-year-old suspect was later arrested for using criminal force to obstruct a public servant.

Zaliha, commenting on the in-

cident, confirmed that several engagement sessions with the affected traders had been held since November last year, including additional discussions in January.

"This was not a surprise demolition. Some traders agreed to relocation, others didn't. That's why we're meeting them again to discuss suitable resettlement options."

Zaliha said while the project to widen key roads would proceed, the government remained committed to the welfare of affected traders.

"They need not worry. We are doing our best to help them relocate and are trying to be fair."