

# Hampered by slow decision

## Retailers urge DBKL to fast-track liquor licence approval process

By BAVANI M  
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CHINESE medicine halls and sundry shops in Kuala Lumpur are urging the local authority to speed up the approval process for the sale of surplus liquor stock in the run-up to Chinese New Year.

They say this is the ideal time for them to clear their stocks by including them in festive hampers, which are in high demand during this period.

These retailers are no longer allowed to sell hard liquor from Nov 1, 2021, following a ban by Federal Territories Ministry.

However, they were told they could apply to renew their licence and sell the items to clear old stock.

Their efforts so far have been hampered by the lack of urgency on the part of Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL).

The Federal Territory and Selangor Chinese Medicine/Drug Sellers Association wants DBKL to speed up the liquor licence approval process.

Its president Loh Kim Fong said the association along with other trade associations had jointly submitted an appeal letter to get their liquor licences renewed, so that they could sell the item without worrying about DBKL enforcement officers penalising them.

But there has been no word so far from the local authority.

"The first time we applied, it was rejected."

"We have reapplied and are still waiting for an answer from DBKL."

"During the meetings (with DBKL and Federal Territories Ministry), they assured us it was possible. But time is running out," said Loh.

"The Chinese New Year period is the best time for us to clear our stock, by including them in festive hampers," he added.

Last November, Federal Territories Ministry had stated that sundry shops, convenience stores and Chinese medicine halls were not permitted to sell hard liquor.

Its Minister Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim said in Parliament last year that DBKL would enforce the new guidelines with joint enforcement with the police, Customs Department and Health Ministry.

However, Shahidan added that those whose liquor licences had expired could appeal to the Excise Licensing Board of the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur.

Many retailers who were affected by the ban submitted their appeals.

But they are still waiting for the green light allowing them to sell



Hui Ging says she has applied to DBKL to renew the liquor licence for her shop but has yet to get it. — Photos: YAP CHEE HONG/The Star

liquor for the upcoming festival.

One such retailer is Loh Hui Ging who runs a Chinese medicine shop in Overseas Union Garden.

"We have applied (to renew) our liquor licence but we are still waiting," she said, adding that business had been slow, with a 50% drop in sales this year.

"Even the sale of hampers has dropped significantly," said Hui Ging.

She said that although customers were still ordering hampers as Chinese New Year gifts, there had been a big drop in the amount spent per hamper.

"Even corporate companies are cutting down," she said.

Another retailer, operating in Taman United, off Jalan

A bottle of liquor adds a premium to a Chinese New Year hamper and elevates the festive gift's value.

Kelang Lama, who did not wish to be identified, said his business had been badly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and the ban on the sale of hard liquor made it worse.

He said the business had suffered losses of up to 70%.

"This Chinese New Year period is a time for us to break even, and we can only do so if we are allowed to sell liquor through our hampers," he said.

"A hamper without liquor is like soup without salt," said Kim Fong, a retailer in Kuchai Lama, when asked about the significance of hampers that came with liquor bottles.

"It is always the most coveted part of the hamper basket, and with the higher priced hamper, you can be assured that the liquor bottle will be the most expensive item," he said.

"A liquor bottle adds a premium to a hamper."

"Before Covid-19, we used to sell more than 2,000 hampers during the two weeks before Chinese New Year. Now, we are only able to sell around 200," said Hui Ging.

She said that in eight out of 10 orders, customers who requested for a custom-made hamper would

want a liquor bottle as the main item.

"Limited-edition liquor bottles are the most popular," she said, adding that hamper prices ranged from as low as RM100 to as high as RM8,000.

A retailer from Cheras, who only wanted to be identified as Lam, said he had a room full of liquor bottles that needed to be cleared soon as he still owed thousands of ringgit to his supplier.

"He is a friend, so he is not pushing me (for payment) yet."

"But I am hoping that I can clear the stock during the Chinese New Year period," he said.

Hamper-gifting is a tradition among the Chinese community during the Chinese New Year season.

When contacted, Kuala Lumpur Excise Licensing Board chairman Datuk Jason Lau Beng Wei said he had already discussed the matter with DBKL, but was still awaiting the Licensing Department's go-ahead to allow retailers to sell liquor.

StarMetro's attempts to get comments from DBKL's Licensing Department were futile, as calls and text messages went unanswered.



# 'Build more retention ponds in KL to mitigate floods'

By FARID WAHAB  
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THE authorities in Kuala Lumpur should build more retention ponds and upgrade existing ones to sustain more water, says community activist Yee Poh Ping.

He also urged Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) and the Drainage and Irrigation Department (DID) to coordinate flood mitigation efforts.

"Come up with a regular schedule to carry out desiltation works at major rivers and ponds, at least thrice a year."

"Build a bund along Sungai Batu, Sungai Jinjang, Sungai Gombak, Sungai Keroh and Sungai Klang to prevent water overflow," he said.

Yee stressed that the authorities should not approve any more land transfers for developments at water catchment areas.

He cited the retention pond in Taman Wahyu, Kepong, that had been earmarked for a mixed development project.



This retention-pond in Taman Wahyu, Kepong, is earmarked for development but there are fears it can affect flood mitigation efforts in Kuala Lumpur. — Photos by AZLINA ABDULLAH/The Star

On Jan 8, Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission ordered DBKL to appoint a surveyor to measure the actual land-size set aside for the development.

This came after claims by Segambut MP Hannah Yeoh that six retention ponds were alienated between October 2015 and September 2020 for development.



Yee urges the government to stop approving retention pond sites for development.

DID deputy director Ratna Rajah Sivapiragasam, in a StarMetro report on Jan 3, said the retention pond remained under its purview although the land it was on had

been sold.

Kuala Lumpur mayor Datuk Seri Mahadi Che Ngah, when contacted, said the survey on the development at the pond in Taman Wahyu would be done speedily.

"A surveyor will come up with a technical drawing to ascertain if the development takes place within its rightful space."

"We need to find out what is the procedure involved and the level of precision needed for the survey," he said when asked on the timeline of the study.

On a related matter, Yee rapped opposition MPs over this issue.

"Why didn't they resolve this issue when they were in power?"

"This issue is not new as I have raised it several years ago," he said.

On Jan 1, Lembah Pantai MP Fahmi Fadzil lodged a police report with Cheras MP Tan Kok Wai and Yeoh, urging for an investigation into the pond alienation issue.



# Semua kawasan kolam takungan air di KL akan dipertahankan

Berita Harian, 12/1/22 (Rabu) - pg. 1 & 6

**Oleh Suzalina Halid**  
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**Kuala Lumpur:** Kementerian Wilayah Persekutuan memberi jaminan kawasan kolam takungan air sedia ada di ibu negara akan terus dipertahankan dan terpelihara daripada sebarang projek komersial.

Menterinya, Datuk Seri Shaidan Kassim, berkata isu kepentingan mempertahankan kolam takungan air khususnya bagi tujuan tebatan banjir akan dibawa kepada jawatankuasa khas untuk tindakan susulan.

"Pada pendapat saya, kawasan sekitar dan kapasiti air dalam kolam takungan perlu dipertahankan termasuk mengambil

kira syarat ditetapkan Jabatan Pengairan dan Saliran (JPS) dan syarat ini tidak berubah.

"Malah, perkara ini sudah dibincangkan sejak tiga bulan lalu bahawa semua kawasan takungan dan kapasitinya mesti dipertahankan," katanya kepada *BH*, semalam.

*BH* semalam melaporkan, agensi teknikal dan kejuruteraan yang bertanggungjawab isu banjir pernah mengesyorkan beberapa kolam air di ibu kota diwartakan sebagai kolam takungan banjir dan mengelakkannya daripada dijadikan kawasan komersial, namun syor itu ditolak.

**Nasional 6**



# 'Komited pastikan ibu kota ada kawasan hijau'

## Dari Muka 1

Perkara itu didedahkan Ketua Pengarah Institut Penyelidikan Air Kebangsaan Malaysia yang juga bekas Ketua Pengarah JPS, Datuk Ir Nor Hisham Mohd Ghazali bahawa syor dan cadangan kolam takungan diwartakan dibuat berdasarkan aspek teknikal, khususnya berkaitan kepentingan rancangan tembatan banjir di Kuala Lumpur.

Pada masa sama, Presiden Persatuan Pencinta Alam Malaysia (MNS), Prof Dr Ahmad Ismail, berkata sebarang gangguan terhadap kawasan tadahan air di Kuala Lumpur adalah berisiko berikutan kedudukan ibu kota yang tiada kawasan menyerap air; selain kerap berlaku banjir kilat.

Mengulas lanjut, Shahidan berkata, pihaknya komited memastikan ibu kota mempunyai kawasan hijau, termasuk kolam takungan air yang mencukupi da-

lam keadaan pembangunan diteruskan.

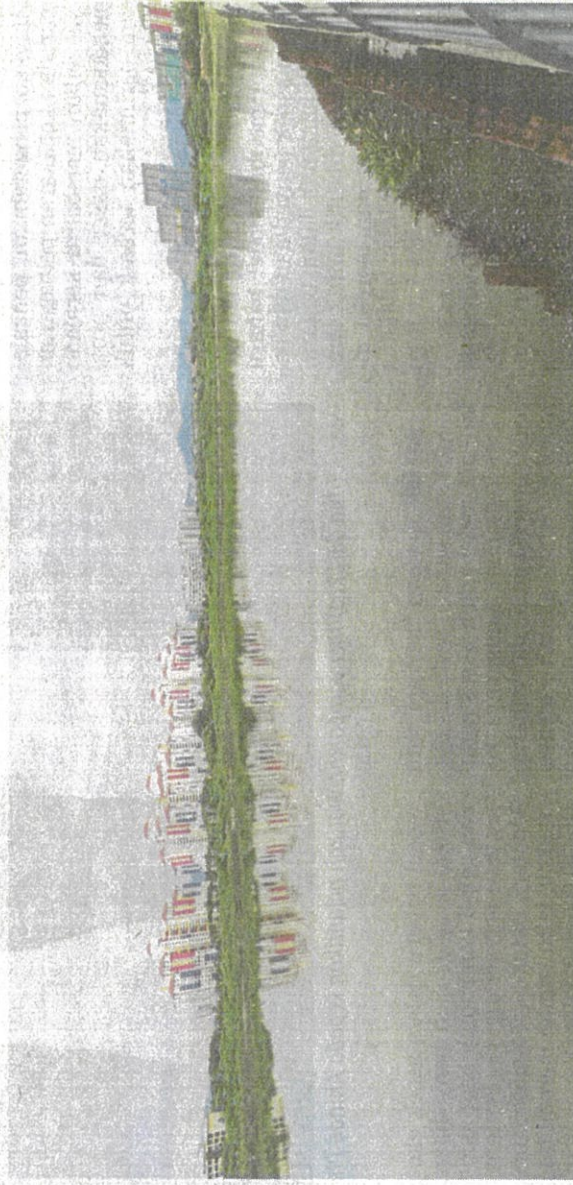
"Ada juga pembangunan dibuat di kawasan sekitar sebuah kolam takungan di mana kita minta syarikat (pemaju) tidak mengganggu kolam takungan ini dan mereka bersetuju.

"Kita memberi perhatian supaya kapasiti kolam takungan tidak berubah dan dijaga di samping pembangunan boleh diteruskan," katanya.

Sehubungan itu, beliau meminta mana-mana pihak yang mempunyai maklumat mengenai kolam takungan air yang terjejas akibat pembangunan menyalurkan kepadaanya untuk mencari penyelesaian terbaik.

Pada masa sama, katanya sebarang projek pembangunan yang dilaksanakan akan dipastikan ia tidak membabitkan pelanggaran undang-undang dan peraturan ditetapkan pihak berkuasa.

"Saya sendiri mahu melihat lebih banyak kolam takungan air



Kerajaan akan memastikan supaya kapasiti kolam takungan tidak berubah dan dijaga di samping meneruskan pembangunan. (Foto hiasan)

nyak pokok, malah kita sasaran untuk menanam sejuta pokok.

"Kita tidak akan membuat sesuatu yang boleh menyebabkan kesan yang memudaratkan penduduk, maknanya kita tidak menggunakan kawasan takungan air," katanya.

an Jabatan Ketua Pengarah Tanah dan Galian Persekutuan (JKPTG).

"Dalam melalui proses pembangunan yang tidak boleh dielakkan di Wilayah Persekutuan, kita juga akan menambah kawasan lapang yang ditanam dengan ba-

bagi mengatasi masalah banjir dapat dipertahankan di ibu kota," katanya.

Namun beliau menjelaskan, tidak semua tanah di ibu kota adalah milik Dewan Bandaraya Kuala Lumpur (DBKL) kerana ada sebahagiannya adalah kepunya-