

Yearender

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IT HAS been an eventful year for Klangites as they had to battle poor air quality due to the haze this year. Klang Municipal Council (MPK) too had its hands full dealing with traffic issues and complaints about cleanliness and rubbish collection.

There was also a change at the helm of MPK as president Datuk Mohamad Yasid Bidin bade farewell after two terms when his contract expired in November. His successor has yet to be named.

Here's a wrap-up of some of the major news in MPK.

Rubbish collection

In February, households in older neighbourhoods of Taman Petaling, Taman Palm Grove, Taman Chi Liung and Southern Park were told to put their domestic rubbish at the front of their houses for collection instead of the back lanes.

People were very unhappy with the proposed arrangement involving KDEB Waste Management Sdn Bhd contractors and protested, resulting in MPK rescinding the decision.

The service delivery of the council and its contractors, especially when it came to cleanliness, desilting of drains, grass cutting and repair of damaged infrastructure, came in for a lot of criticism.

Klang MP Charles Santiago told MPK not to shirk its duties over basic services but take charge as the government's performance is judged at the most basic levels and through the amenities it provides.

Cleaning works, cutting grass and sweeping roads are under the purview of KDEB Waste Management, and the firm was told to get its contractors to keep to the schedule.

Gag order

One issue that upset ratepayers was the ban on councillors making press statements on their respective zones, which did not go down well with community leaders.

In a unilateral move, without consulting the council's Legal Department, MPK president Mohamad Yasid issued a two-page letter in April prohibiting councillors as well as MPK staff from making statements. It stated issues about the council that could only be addressed by the council president, secretary, corporate communications director and MPK employees who have been given the authority to do so.

An activist group called Otai Reformasi protested, saying it was absurd as councillors were accountable to residents.

Due to strong objections, MPK was advised by the Selangor government to withdraw the directive.

Another pressing issue for Klangites was the 14-month closure of Lorong Perbandaran. Protests and complaints from residents and road users forced MPK to reopen the 350m dual slip road to traffic but it has been kept time-regulated.

Motorists are allowed to use the road between 6.30am to 8.30am, and 4pm to 6pm (except public holidays).

MPK closed the road on April 3, 2018, citing security concerns. The road is one of the busiest and provides motorists access to Klang town, Meru and Kapar via

Council goes back to basics

Rubbish collection, traffic issues and haze kept MPK busy



An aerial view of Klang city blanketed by thick haze in September. — Filepic



A mural of a deer adorning the wall of one of the back lanes in South Klang. — Filepic

Jambatan Kota.

Until today the closure is still causing massive traffic snarls outside the Kuan Yin Chinese temple in Jalan Raya Barat during peak hours. Motorists want the road kept open at all times.

Meanwhile, construction of a new multi-lane roundabout at Jalan Dato Hamzah, one of the main roads into Klang's Little India, is ongoing and expected to be completed soon. It is aimed at easing traffic movement and improving safety.



Mohamad Yasid ended his second term as MPK president in November.

Hazy days and closures

September saw most of the country blanketed by a cloud of smog but Klangites faced the brunt of it as air quality took a dangerous dip. For more than three weeks, haze shrouded the skyline.

Other than the transboundary haze that has plagued the region annually, the open burning at Johan Setia and neighbouring Kuala Langat due to slash and burn agriculture methods aggravated the situation.

In Johan Setia, the Air Pollutant Index reached 243.

MPK along with the Department of Environment had to step up enforcement activities to ensure that open burning was curtailed.



Rubbish clogging monsoon drains in Klang. Residents want the contractors appointed by MPK to do their jobs properly. — Filepic

uproar among stakeholders at the council's suggestion to change the name Chetty Padang to Taman Warisan.

Though MPK has clarified that it was only a suggestion, there still has not been any final decision on the renaming.

There were some bright spots in the year for MPK, which in February came up with plans to beautify Klang's back lanes with 3D murals of wild animals and upgrade walkways to attract more visitors to heritage trails and

deter bad hats.

Painting of murals, lane upgrade and widening of the sidewalks along Jalan Station are still ongoing.

Another piece of good news was the introduction of the Klang-Meru-Kapar free bus rides via the Smart Selangor free community bus service that covers 23.6km with 35 stops.

It was part of MPK's sustainable transport planning to reduce single occupant vehicles and serve the B40 group.