

Newbie MBPJ councillors ready to serve

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By SHEILA SRI PRIYA
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FOUR persons with backgrounds in either law or politics have been appointed as councillors for the 2021/2022 session in Petaling Jaya City Council.

Matters relating to facilities for seniors, cleanliness and online business economic opportunities are among areas of interest for these new faces.

Councillor Nalina Nair, 32, a law graduate, has been curious about politics ever since primary school.

It started from encouragement from her father to read *The Star* that eventually developed into a habit.

"In 2009, I attended my first Bersih rally without my dad's knowledge. I told my mum of my intentions and she drove me to the Wangsa Maju LRT station to attend the rally," said Nair who is of Indian-Chinese parentage.

In her early 20s, Nair was drawn to Parti Sosialis Malaysia, Lawyers for Liberty and also volunteered at the Bar Council's Legal Aid Centre.

Nair, who is Kampung Tunku assemblyman Lim Yi Wei's special assistant, was appointed as the councillor for Zone 17.

She will be overseeing areas such as Taman Sea, Paramount and Taman Aman.

Nair is keen to focus on matters relating to poor and young families in Flat Sri Aman, facilities for seniors and the public in Taman Aman as well as parks in general.

Another lawyer is councillor Bryan Ng Yih Min, 30.

He was drawn to politics after being issued a summons for parking at a non-designated area.

"I was furious for always getting parking summons as the condo I lived in was built in the 1970s and there were few parking bays.

"I thought it was unfair and went to see then Petaling Jaya Selatan MP Hee Loy Sian's office.



"He spoke to me for three hours and explained why I was facing such issues.

"I eventually became a polling and counting agents (Paca) in the 2013 and 2018 elections," said Ng who wants to see day-to-day issues such as parking and matters pertaining to the city council being well-managed.

Ng is the representative of Zone 13 comprising Sections 6, 7, 9 and 52.

"There is a need for safe and conducive public facilities, including proper walkways at parks, especially for the seniors and children.

"Old trees need to be pruned and drains must be cleared to keep mosquitoes from breeding.

"I plan to help business owners get better sales by introducing delivery applications and digital coupons to help draw visitors," he said.

Fifty-three-year-old councillor Norah Mansor, who is from the health food sector, is passionate about empowering women.

As the councillor for Zone 17, comprising PJS1 and PJS2, Norah is only too familiar with the issues as she is a resident there.

"Indiscriminate dumping of rubbish is

Ng understands the need for safe and conducive public facilities such as proper walkways in parks.

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Although the market is clean, we suspect some of the restaurants and kopitiam may be discarding waste in ways that may still attract rodents.

Medaline Chang

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the number one problem that I want to tackle," said the mother of three.

Councillor Medaline Chang She-Yun, 48, is a former subeditor who went on to help organise Bersih 1 in 2007.

She is the Zone 10 councillor overseeing Sections 16 and 17.

Rat infestation and rubbish are among issues that she wants to deal with.

"Although the market is clean, we suspect some of the restaurants and kopitiam may be discarding waste in ways that may still attract rodents," she said.

New MBPJ councillors and their assigned zones



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Community gardening, sustainable food gardens and matters related to mental health of senior citizens are among issues she is keen to be involved in.

Business slows down at PJ's oldest wet market

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Significant drop in number of visitors, stalls at Pasar Besar Jalan Othman

By SHEILA SRI PRIYA

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PASAR Besar Jalan Othman in PJ Old Town is not as bustling as before.

StarMetro visited the wet market, the oldest in Petaling Jaya, recently and found that although most traders manning the stalls were locals, there were fewer visitors.

The place was not as packed as compared to a year ago, when visitors had to squeeze through narrow walkways.

Also known as Petaling Jaya Old Town market, practising physical distancing here is not as difficult these days with fewer people in the building.

The first floor, where fruit stalls and sundry shops are located, appeared to be mostly unoccupied.

Jalan Othman Market Association secretary Sathiyaseelan Ramachandran said business had been affected by Covid-19 since last year.

"We are seeing a 50% drop in customers and that means a reduction in income too.

"The lack of a crowd is partly because of the many movement control order phases," he said, adding that bad weather and floods in other states had affected the supply of goods.

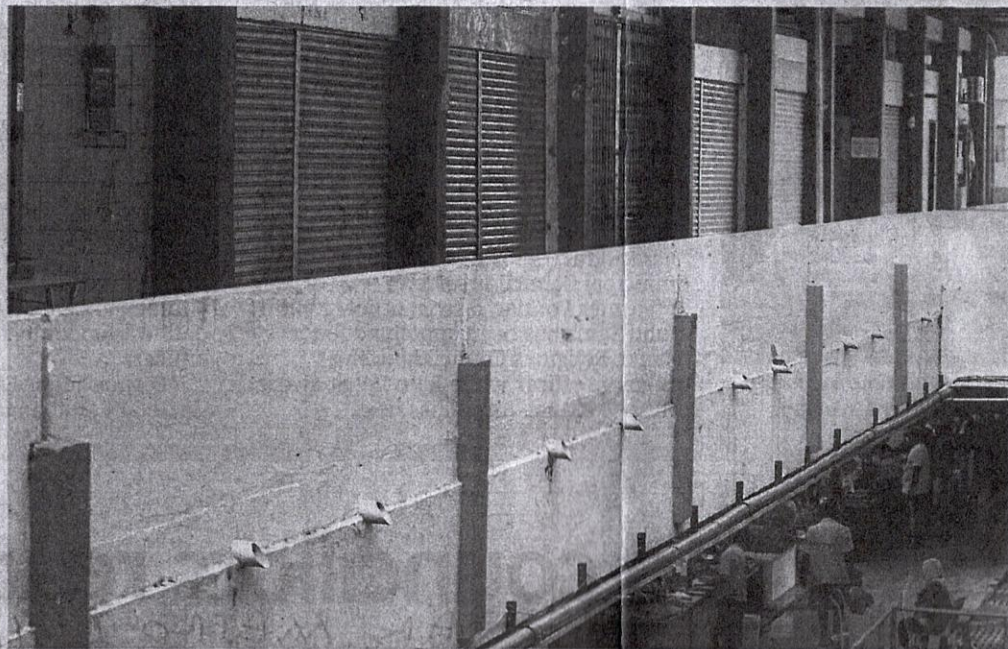
He added the restaurant business had taken a hit during this period and as a result, market traders were feeling the impact.

"We are like an ecosystem that relies on different businesses.

"When the restaurants close, we are affected too," he said.

Sathiyaseelan said the Petaling Jaya City Council (MBPJ) had implemented strict rules and were also conducting regular inspections, so those who could not comply had closed shop.

"Many have moved out and set



Shoplots on the first floor of the PJ Old Town market are mostly closed.

(Below)
The impact of Covid-19 and the MCO are being felt by traders.
— Photos:
YAP CHEE
HONG/The
Star

up elsewhere. There was a trader operating for 40 years here who decided to open a mini market somewhere else," he said.

The shortage of manpower had also played a role.

He added that many shoplots on the first and second floors were unoccupied possibly because traders did not want to open during this MCO period.

"Many older customers are not coming to the market but we do see some new faces," he said.

Area councillor Ermeemarianna Saadon said foreign workers in the market would flee each time they see her walk into the market.

"They know my face and run when they see me. They are there but not as many as before but some are still managing the shops, which is prohibited.

"Documented foreign workers can only be employed as cleaners.

"The problem is when they conduct sales transactions," she said.



Petaling Jaya mayor Datuk Mohd Sayuthi Bakar said the city council would revoke the licences of traders found hiring foreigners to man their stalls.

The vacant lots could be due to those whose licences were

revoked, he opined.

However, Mohd Sayuthi said the weak economy may also be a factor.

"Traders may not want to do business during this MCO period," he added.