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Weekend road closure of Bukit Bintang to stay

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THE much criticised closure of Jalan Bukit Bintang, from 4pm on Saturday to 2am on Monday, will stay in effect, Kuala Lumpur City Hall Datuk Bandar Datuk Mohamad Shaïd Mohd Taufek said.

Despite objections from businessmen, residents and hoteliers, Mohamad Shaïd said: "We will observe and make improvements where necessary."

He also said tourist buses would be allowed to drop off their passengers next to the Regent Hotel carpark.

"Just next to the parking lot, there is a road. But buses have found it difficult to enter because cars are parked along the road. To make it easier for the buses to enter, the motorcycle parking will be removed.

"The carpark land belongs to the Regent Hotel and it has agreed to allow buses to drop off passengers there.

"Buses can come in via the Shahzan building and drop off passengers at the parking lot," he told reporters after attending a meet-the-public session on the first floor of Dewan Bandaraya in Jalan Raja Laut.

He said in order to make it more convenient for the public, and as a result of space constraints, the meet-the-public sessions will be held on the ground floor.

He added that the main objective of the meetings was to solve problems immediately.

Meanwhile, Bukit Bintang MP Fong Kui Lan, Kepong MP Dr Tan Seng Giaw, Seputeh MP Theresa Kok and Cheras MP Tan Kok Wai submitted a memorandum to Mohamad Shaïd on the objections to the Jalan Bukit Bintang road closure.

Fong said a total of 584 petitions from various businesses and residents of Bukit Bintang were received, objecting to the weekend closure.

He said the closure, although well intended, had caused a sharp decrease in business.

Fong said many foreign tourists had also cancelled their hotel reservations after being informed that the hotels were located in Jalan Bukit Bintang and subject to the weekend closure.

"Business and tourist visits have decreased tremendously. Taxis too are refusing to take passengers who want to go to Bukit Bintang or wish to return to their hotels in Bukit Bintang.

"Some tourists even have problems getting taxis to send them to the Kuala Lumpur International Airport."

He added that the traffic load in the vicinity of Bukit Bintang is 3,500 vehicles per hour. The closure, however, had made the traffic conditions even worse.

Fong said it was suggested to Mohamad Shaïd that the closure only be carried out during special occasions to promote tourism.

He also said public transportation should be allowed into the area to ferry tourists and customers.

Fong also said he would submit the memorandum to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and to the Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister Datuk Abdul Kadir Sheikh Fadzir next week.

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