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Transit centre for homeless shut down

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Grounds neglected at Anjung Kelana, opened in KL during Covid-19 pandemic

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ANJUNG Kelana, established to take homeless people off the streets to curb the spread of Covid-19, has closed down.

The transit centre in Taman Desa, Kuala Lumpur, opened on Feb 28, 2021, during the second movement control order period.

The project, initiated by the Federal Territories Ministry, under then minister Tan Sri Annuar Musa, was managed by Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) and the National Welfare Foundation.

It was meant to be a transit home to rehabilitate and transform the lives of the homeless in the capital during the early days of the pandemic, besides getting them off the streets where they could be susceptible to infections.

At its height, the transformation centre housed 70 people but the number dropped to 19 by mid-2022.

During a recent visit by *StarMetro*, a security guard confirmed that Anjung Kelana ceased operations in May.

The area surrounding the building was unkempt with overgrown grass. There was also rubbish piled up in front of the building.

The land belonging to Tenaga Nasional Bhd (TNB) opposite the centre, which was used by the residents to learn fertigation and farming, now lies barren and empty. The irrigation pipes, however, are still in place.

During a previous visit here in



StarMetro's report on the centre on March 30, 2021.

2022, the land was thriving with corn and other vegetables planted by the residents. The produce was sold to the community living nearby.

StarMetro ran several stories recounting the experience of several residents who picked up farming skills and felt they had been given a second chance to make something of their lives.

In a written statement, DBKL Corporate Communications Unit said Anjung Kelana was shut down four months ago on May 1.

"All residents at the centre have been transferred to Anjung Kembara, the homeless centre in Medan Tuanku, and the Chow Kit community learning centre.

"Both centres are also operating as food distribution and self-development centres."



The plot opposite Anjung Kelana, which used to be planted with a variety of vegetables, is now barren.



Anjung Kelana in Taman Desa looking shabby after closing down in May. — Photos: YAP CHEE HONG/The Star

On the community farm at Anjung Kelana, DBKL said a portion of the land was being used for farming by the Taman Desa residents in partnership with the Kuala Lumpur and Selangor Association for the Homeless and Needy.

When contacted, the association chairman Rashdan Rashid confirmed they were using part of the land for urban farming.

The land where the shelter sits belongs to DBKL and used to be

the former Desa Water Park.

However, news of the shelter's closure has set off alarm bells among some Taman Desa residents who fear impending development.

"I hope that there are no plans to develop the land here," said Alice Chee, a resident of a condominium nearby.

"This area is congested. I hope they will build a park instead."

Taman Desa Residents Association (TDRA) chairman

Wong Chan Choy said he had not heard of any plans for the area.

However, he said the association attended a meeting with DBKL a few months ago on the possibility of using the TNB land for farming.

"We want to use the land so that residents can farm and lead healthier lives.

"We have written to TNB, the land office and DBKL, but we have not heard from anyone yet," said Wong.