



A tribute: People busy hanging their lanterns on the wall next to the carpark and KL Commercial Book Co shop.

Support from artists

More than 1,000 gather in Jalan Sultan for night of activities

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Photos by LIM CHENG KIAT

MORE than a 1,000 people gathered along Jalan Sultan in Kuala Lumpur last Sunday to light up the stretch with colourful lanterns as part of the Petaling Street Art Community Project to save it from being acquired for the MRT project.

The crowd started gathering at the basketball court near the Chin Woo Stadium at 7pm to watch various artists expressing their dissatisfaction through a mix of art forms such as song, dance, drama and music.

At 8pm, project assistant coordinator Chong Keat Aun briefed the crowd on the current situation in Jalan Sultan.

"This might just be the last celebration held in Jalan Sultan.

"The 20 property owners along Jalan Sultan and Jalan Petaling received the final notice from the Land Office stating that

if the owners do not sign a mutual agreement to move out for six months by Jan 30, the Land Acquisition Act will be imposed and the construction of the MRT will start.

"We are not against the MRT project but we want the route to be realigned to Jalan Pudu or Jalan Tun Tan Cheng Lock instead.

"If the route goes through Jalan Tun Tan Cheng Lock, no land acquisition is required or heritage buildings demolished, thus saving public funds.

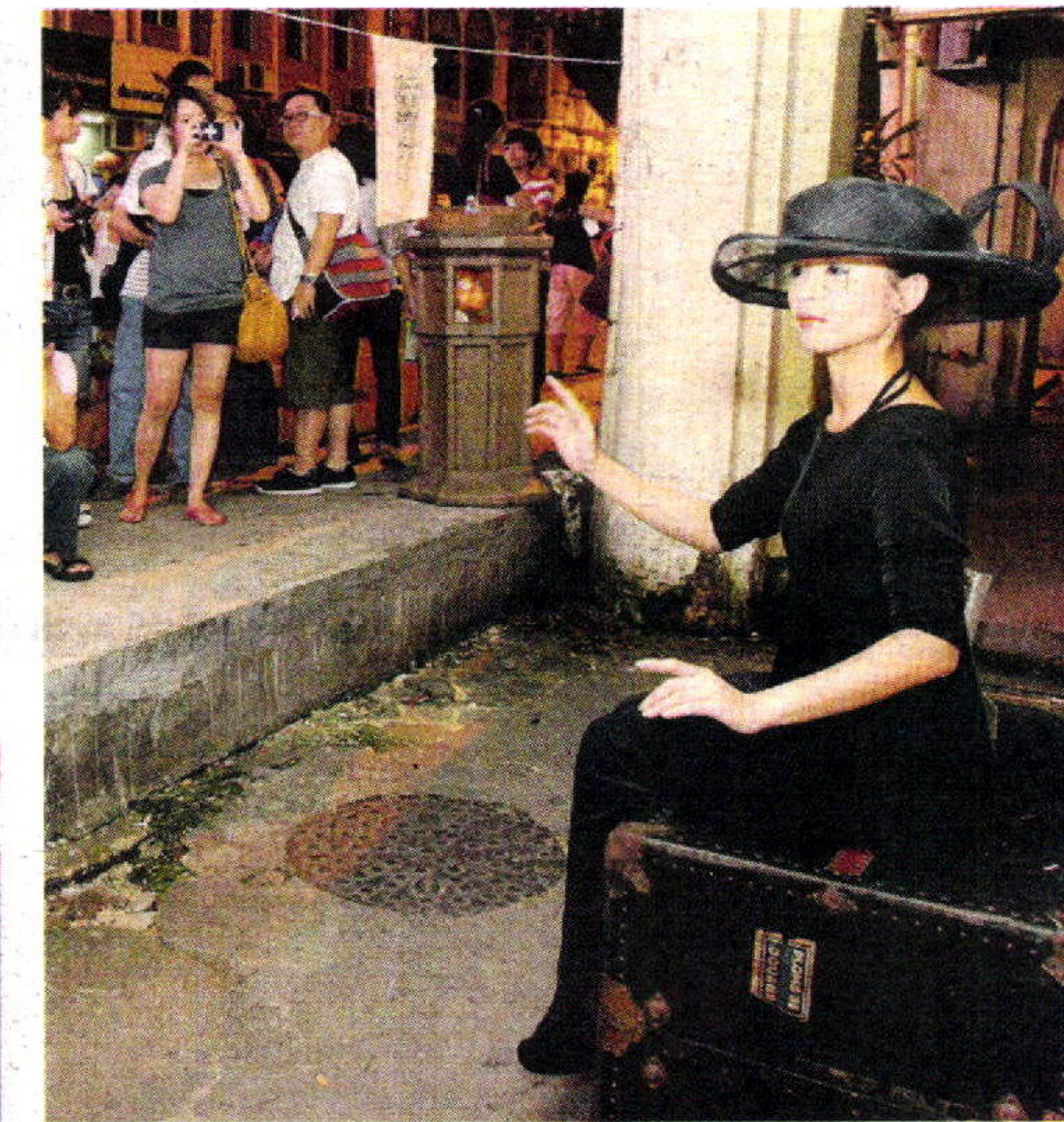
"It is not fair for all businesses to close shop with no guarantee that buildings would be safe or given back to us after the underground tunnelling work is completed.

"We demand a public consultation and MRT Corp to share the social, economic and environmental impact assessment (EIA) report with the people effected and consider the issues

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Large group: The crowd gathered at the carpark to watch performances in support of saving Jalan Sultan.



Set in time: Han Fei from Puchong dancing slowly in a sorrowful mood.

All want heritage site preserved

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of culture and heritage.

"Plaza Warisan and UDA Ocean buildings were recognised as historical heritage buildings in the 1990s but now, they are to be demolished for the MRT construction.

"This arbitrary decision is not acceptable. This proposition is also in conflict with the KL Structure Plan 2020 to preserve Jalan Sultan and Jalan Petaling as the city's oldest historical heritage sites," he said.

At 9pm, the crowd with their lighted lanterns walked past Kuala Lumpur Gospel Hall, Selangor Yan Keng Benevolent Dramatic Association building, Foto Pak Tai and Lok Ann Coffee Shop, and hung their lanterns along the shops before congregating at the carpark next to KL Commercial Book Co for more activities and performances.

Along the side of the road were lighted bottles for people to write their wishes.

Other activities included a calligraphy demonstration, poetry recital, drum performances, dramas, slide show and lion dance.

A German artist, Astrid

Kooppe was also seen walking the street with a white abstract *tang long* (lantern) lending support to save the heritage buildings.

"It is such a pity that heritage buildings have to go. The new generation will feel sorry when they look at old photographs of Jalan Sultan and compare it with what it would have become," she said.

Another performing artiste Liu Kit Liang, walked around with a red stamp which read "protest" asking others to stamp it anywhere on his shirtless body in exchange for a stamp on their hand.

His unique way of garnering support got him almost fully inked in red by 10pm.

There were many activities going on simultaneously along that stretch such as the silent performance by Han Fei from Puchong, who was dressed in black dancing slowly in a sorrowful mood and clutching an empty photo frame near an empty treasure box.

"These are the last moments. There is nothing in the frame and nothing in the treasure box. It is soulless without contents," she said and continued to dance.



Expression: One of the performances by Nyobakan with Kiea Kuan Nam (right) and Jess Liew.