

Sepanggar tragedy: Road near port not suited for container movements – JPJ

BY ELTON GOMES ON OCTOBER 20, 2026, TUESDAY AT 4:55 PMSABAH

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Mohd Harris (second left) and the JPJ officers seen at the site of the tragic accident.

KOTA KINABALU (Oct 20): The road near the Sepanggar Port where a man and his daughter were crushed to death by a falling container is deemed unsuitable for container loading and transfer activities.

Road Transport Department (JPJ) Sabah director Datuk Mohd Harris Ali said this was among the findings by the department during a site inspection on Monday to assess safety concerns and identify improvements to prevent recurrence of the tragedy.

Mohd Harris said container loading and transfer activities should be carried out within port premises or at container depots approved by the local authority.

“Some operators were found placing containers along road shoulders, including over drains, posing a threat to road users and also damaging the infrastructure,” he said in a statement.

He stressed that such practices must be addressed to ensure container transport and handling activities would not endanger other road users.

He added that JPJ Sabah would raise the need for suitable container storage depots and waiting areas for commercial vehicles with the relevant authorities.

Mohd Harris also called for consideration of road humps, road repairs, improved lighting and wider road shoulders along the route to Sepanggar Port to reduce accident risks, particularly at night.

In the incident on Sunday evening, the 53-year-old man and his 24-year-old daughter were killed when a container fell onto the car that they were travelling in near Sepanggar Port.

Initial investigations found that a trailer had stopped on the left lane to load a container from the roadside onto the vehicle.

The container then fell onto a passing car.

It took firefighters more than three hours to extricate the victims out of the wrecked car.

Both victims were pronounced dead at the scene by the paramedics.

The bodies were later taken to the Queen Elizabeth I Hospital for post-mortem.

The 49-year-old trailer driver was detained by the police to assist investigations under Section 41(1) of the Road Transport Act 1987.