

# LITTERBUGS

S 25 JUN 1990

# BEWARE

Laws to make offenders clean up their mess

**IPOH Sun. — Litterbugs may be asked to clean up areas they make dirty under new laws being considered by the Government.**

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the Government wanted the people to be disciplined and be conscious of hygiene and cleanliness.

The Prime Minister said fines would also be imposed on offenders under the proposed anti-litter laws.

"It is not just to educate the offenders but also to help change their attitude," he said.

He said introducing such laws was not a reckless action as similar regulations had been enforced in developed countries.

Dr Mahathir was launching a \$31.8 million national five-year campaign, Rakyat *Bersih* dan *Negara Sihat* (clean citizens, healthy nation), to keep the environment clean and healthy, and to upgrade the standard and quality of life.

He said it was important to incorporate cleanliness into the country's culture.

"To achieve this aim, parents, teachers and department heads need to help inculcate good values on cleanliness at homes, in schools and in the offices," he said.

"The people should be guided at all times until they view with disgust dirtiness and dirty habits."

Dr Mahathir said many people still practised "double standard" by restricting cleanliness to the confines of their homes and not outside.

"The Government is sometimes forced to take legal action to discipline the people to ensure that they keep the environment clean and healthy," he said.

Dr Mahathir said there was also an

economic dimension to the campaign as it could lead to a recycling industry to create business and job opportunities.

He said Malaysians threw away 10,500 tonnes of wastes daily. "It has been estimated that rubbish like metals, glass, papers and others, if processed and recycled, will give rise to business opportunities worth more than \$1 billion a year," he said.

He said that through recycling, the

costs of various products would be reduced.

As part of the national cleanliness campaign, Dr Mahathir said the people would be encouraged to sell their unwanted vehicles and things to steel mills, like Syarikat Perwaja, in Terengganu.

"If the campaign is successful, it will not only benefit Syarikat Perwaja but also save millions of ringgit in foreign exchange on getting scrap

iron from abroad."

Similarly, other wastes such as wood, bottles, papers, cardboards could be recycled and some rubbish could be used as fuel to generate electric power.

Dr Mahathir said housewives should be taught to put rubbish for recycling in plastic bags separate from rubbish to be thrown away for good.

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# councils

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He said in developed countries, rubbish would not be collected if they had not been separately packed.

Dr Mahathir said initially the campaign would concentrate on activities carried out by the local authorities.

"Cleanliness campaigns carried out previously were not effective. I hope the plan drawn up by the Housing and Local Government Ministry is detailed and comprehensive enough to bring about a lasting effect," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Kuala Lumpur had become the cleanest city in the country and called on other local authorities to emulate the city in its beautification and cleanliness drive.

"Malaysians, especially residents in Kuala Lumpur, are proud of the country's capital," he said.

"Local councils should strive to beautify their respective areas so that their residents would be proud of the places where they stay."

Dr Mahathir said the country had improved on its cleanliness though there was still room for improvement.

"We still see rubbish strewn about everywhere. Sometimes it is because of the inadequate efforts and co-ordination of the authorities but more often, the unsightly scene is due to the indifferent attitude of the people who litter their surroundings and pollute the environment," he said.

"We can make laws and impose penalties to check littering but we cannot have sufficient machinery to monitor every one.

"The only way to ensure cleanliness is to have the right attitude. If cleanliness becomes a way of life or habit among the people, if we view with scorn against dirtiness, we need no enforcement to maintain a clean environment.

"In fact, we could have saved millions of ringgits (to upkeep cleanliness) and use the money for more beneficial programmes."

Housing and Local Government Minister Datuk Lee Kim Sai in his speech said that under the campaign, the local authority adjudged to be the best kept would win \$500,000 in development funds.

He said the second and third placed would get

\$300,000 and \$200,000 respectively.

In addition, he said that the Prime Minister had said he would consider offering overseas trips to members and staff of the successful local authority.

The move, he said, was to make local authorities compete against each other in keeping their areas clean and to reward those who had successfully achieved the programme's objectives.

Datuk Lee said 15 areas of activities had been identified for implementation by local authorities under the programme.

They included upgrading the cleanliness of towns, tourist spots, residential areas, industrial estates, schools, squatter areas and traditional villages. The campaign also covered public toilets and drains as well as food handling.

Datuk Lee said local authorities were encouraged to use their initiative and draw up their own activities in implementing the programme.

"They must stress on co-operation from all parties, including the media, in carrying out activities such as *gotong royong*, cleanliness awareness campaigns and beautification projects," he added.

He said in line with the Government's efforts to promote the tourism industry, local authorities must play their part by ensuring that public toilets, beaches and public areas were well-maintained.

He said state governments had agreed to contribute \$100,000 annually to each of their local authorities to finance development projects related to the programme.

"Local authorities must also help finance the projects while the public sector could help through projects such as erecting signboards, billboards, bus-stops and film strips," he added.

Under the programme, each local authority would have 30 public toilets costing about \$35,000 each, apart from sufficient trees, litter boxes, lighted sign boards and bus-stops.

The Government will supply 20 beach combers for cleaning beaches and facilities to build 9,400 flush latrines for 700 villages in the country during the programme.