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Azmi: CFs only after proper landscaping

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KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - Developers who fail to properly incorporate landscaping in their housing projects may not get their certificates of fitness, Deputy Housing and Local Government Minister Datuk Azmi Khalid said today.

He said the failure of housing developers to provide pleasing and orderly landscaping could result in delays in the issuing of CFs.

"In fact, in certain cases the CFs may not be issued at all," he said after launching the Tree Replanting and Management Workshop at Dynasty Hotel.

Azmi said developers must ensure that their landscaping projects meet the regulations and standards set by the local authorities.

This includes compliance with the Town and Country Planning Act 1976 which was amended in 1995 to include some regulations regarding preservation of trees and landscaping.

Under the Act, those who want to develop land with natural growth must submit a contour plan showing the existing landscape and information on all the flora and fauna.

They also have to submit a development plan showing the intended new landscape for approval by the local authorities.

Azmi said the law provided the legal means to meet Malaysia's target of being a "garden nation" by the year 2005 and was in line with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's target of planting three million trees by the year 2000.

However, he said the enforcement aspect had been slack and the local authorities should be taken to task for this.

"I urge all local authorities to take this matter seriously and understand that there's more to landscaping and tree-planting than meets the eye," Azmi said.

He said there was a need to "culturalise" landscaping and to create greater awareness.

Azmi said landscaping was meant not just to please the eye and for aesthetic reasons only, but also for the mind and the soul.

He cited examples of the Japanese passion and love for ikebana (flower arrangement) and bonsai (miniature plants) which was not only visually and aesthetically pleasing, but also appealed to one's higher consciousness.

Azmi also said the ministry intended to standardise public toilets with a set of facilities and probably a design.

On additional public toilets for the Commonwealth Games next year, Azmi said this would be among the extra amenities the ministry would build to cater for the expected huge influx of foreign visitors.

The five-day workshop is organised by the Forest Research Institute of Malaysia, National Landscape Department and Plant Resources of Southeast Asia. The participants are from FRIM, NLD, PROSEA, local authorities and NGOs.

Also present were FRIM chairman Tan Sri G.K. Rama Iyer, FRIM director-general Datuk Dr Abdul Razak Mohd Ali and National Landscape Department director-general Ismail Ngah.

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