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Cleanliness (News Focus)

MALAYSIANS SHOULD MAKE CLEANLINESS A WAY OF LIFE

By: Ahmad Fuad Yahya

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 5 (Bernama) -- When the Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad expressed his disgust over the dirty habit of city dwellers, only then others came up with several bright ideas including providing maximum fine for litterbugs.

Among them was Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) which reportedly would impose a maximum fine of RM500 against litterbugs in addition to greater enforcement.

Housing and Local Government Minister Datuk Dr Ting Chew Peh on the other hand said the higher penalty alone could not guarantee a litter free country if the people did not get rid of the habit of littering all over the place.

Many were of the opinion that the problem of cleanliness was related to the attitude of the people themselves.

Only two days earlier on Aug 1, Alam Flora Sdn Bhd had taken over the task of keeping the city clean from DBKL.

Its Chief Executive Mohamed Siraj Abdul Razack said the littering which occurred in Jalan Bukit Bintang as mentioned by Dr Mahathir was more of a question of attitude of the people rather than rubbish collection service.

"We collect the rubbish every day in the commercial area and three times a week in the housing area. We also provide enough dustbins at public places," he said.

In Jalan Bukit Bintang, he said one garbage can was provided at every 15-metre interval but people still littered.

Mohamed Siraj said enforcement and higher penalty against litterbugs could deter others provided if it was strictly enforced and at all times.

But, a more important measure would be to educate young Malaysians on cleanliness probably incorporating it as part of the curriculum, he said.

"It may take time five to 10 years to inculcate such culture but it is possible," he said.

Developed countries like Japan and Germany too had at one time faced the same problem and they were able to overcome it.

"Dr Mahathir's criticism deserves serious consideration to embark on such an education," said Mohamed Siraj.

Federation of Malaysian Consumer Associations (Fomca) President Prof Hamdan Adnan also stressed on the importance of changing the attitude of the people on the question of cleanliness.

He said the fading spirit of gotong-royong and neighbourliness among town folks was one of the factors for the uncaring attitude of the people towards cleanliness.

"Resident associations in towns should revive the people's interest in maintaining cleanliness," he said.

Hamdan also suggested that the national education system be reviewed to incorporate the question of cleanliness which was also demanded by Islam.

He did not dismiss the possibility that the people might take the question of cleanliness lightly because they paid for rubbish collection service and thus left it to the authorities.

"They feel they have paid highly for the service and littering is probably one way of getting back at the authorities," he said.

Hamdan also suggested that more dustbins be provided for the convenience of the public as there were complaints of some areas without such facility. -- BERNAMA

AFY MAI ABG