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Time to be a society that cares for country

Manoharan Balan

THE sky is crystal blue, visibility is good, the air is fresh and it is nice to be in the outdoors. This is what we see and feel now. But several months ago a part of Asia was blanketed by smoke from the Indonesian forest fires.

There were times I'm sure some of us longed to see the clear sky and breathe the fresh air. That was exactly the feeling during the forest fires. In fact I had wondered if I would ever see blue skies and white clouds again.

Malaysians have very short memory. Despite all the suffering (not to mention the amount of money spent to improve the situation) the country experienced, citizens haven't learned any lesson at all.

In Malaysia garden refuse can be burnt openly. What if all the residents of housing estates start to burn their rubbish at the same time. It is going to create a haze around the whole residential area.

On my way home every evening, I never fail to notice the damage these fires cause to the environment, the air that we breathe and of course the inconvenience to other people who stay in the vicinity. Lately some irresponsible people have taken to burning lalang to clear land.

The houses are full of ash. Cleaning them every day of these ashes which are blown in by the wind is a nuisance.

People have to realise how much inconvenience they cause to others and their neighbours. We are an industrialising country but that doesn't mean we can ignore the environment or the quality of the air that we breathe.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's Vision 2020 shouldn't be misunderstood. Vision 2020 also means upgrading the living standard of Malaysians, and nurturing more intellectuals and a caring society; a society which cares for everything.

But what we have here are people who throw rubbish out of their cars while driving and all kinds of things into the drain; and people who drive out at night with bags of rubbish to be dumped at the roadside.

When are we going to be a society that cares for the country as a whole? The authorities have to find ways to curb open burning.

In some countries garden refuse is processed into fertiliser. Or why not let it degrade biologically.

Come on Malaysians, let your neighbours breathe clean air; do not burn your rubbish, and do not discard it indiscriminately.

Care for the future generations. They need to enjoy what we enjoy today. Discard our selfish attitude now before it's too late.

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Seremban

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