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All have responsibility in maintaining KL, says Datuk Bandar

Ramlan Said; Annie Freeda Cruetz

THE Datuk Bandar's post has always been regarded as a "hot seat". Managing the capital city is a challenge and an unenviable task, and resolving problems like traffic congestion, flash floods and poor roads often create headaches for the city's administrators.

Datuk Bandar Tan Sri Kamaruzzaman Shariff realises that whenever things go wrong in the city, more often than not, he and City Hall will get the blame.

In a 90-minute interview on Thursday, he emphasised that the vision to transform Kuala Lumpur into a garden city of lights was the responsibility of all.

Without public co-operation, he said it would be impossible for Kuala Lumpur to develop its own character and identity, not to mention attaining world-class standard.

"We want to create not only a clean city but also a tidy one. We have the capability to do this."

Kamaruzzaman consented to the interview although it was already 4.30pm and he had just chaired a meeting.

Taking off his coat, he appeared relaxed and composed.

While his heads of department were being summoned, he got the interview underway, responding to claims that the city had become dirtier since the shift of the administrative centre to Putrajaya.

He laughed when pointed out that this was partly due to the Prime Minister not being a resident of the city any more.

(Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is known for paying special attention to the city's upkeep, often spotting weaknesses that are overlooked by many.)

He said the contention was misplaced adding that, on the contrary, the city was cleaner, especially within the city centre.

When the question on flash floods was posed to him, he quipped: "Since coming under fire following the April 26 unusual downpour, I have become an expert in flash floods."

On a more serious note, Kamaruzzaman said it was wrong to assume that well-known cities like London or Paris were all perfect.

Like Kuala Lumpur, these cities also had their flaws but many were unaware of the shortcomings as only the "good side" was highlighted.