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Vendors of pirated VCDs, CDs still common sight despite blitz

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. - Pirated video and compact disc sellers are still a common sight, despite a recent nationwide blitz against such goods.

In the capital city and surrounding areas, they are most easily found at night near all-night mamak shops and other eateries.

The picture of a vendor selling pirated VCDs in Kuala Lumpur was taken outside some shoplots on Jalan Datuk Fuad in Taman Tun Dr Ismail.

New Straits Times photographer Fariz Iswadi, who snapped the shot, was in the area for nearly two hours in the afternoon during which he saw a steady stream of people browsing at the stall.

There was also a second stall further down the same row of shoplots.

The availability of pirated VCDs and CDs yesterday drew the ire of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who said the Government was trying its best to overcome the problem.

Despite having conducted raids, increasing manpower, confiscating equipment, issuing warnings and imposing a ban, the problem remained difficult to solve, he said.

In Johor Baru, pirated VCDs and CDs are easily available in shoplots. Peddlers have retreated there following a crackdown on their sale in open places.

Most retailers now rent a small section of a shoplot to carry out their business. This is especially common along Jalan Wong Ah Fook and at housing estates.

Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Ministry (Johor branch) deputy director Adilah Aziz said piracy was still rampant in the State despite raids carried out from time to time.

"Most of the pirated CDs are those of international artistes. Pirated CDs of local artistes are seldom seen in the market," she said.

In Penang, the famous Lorong Kulit flea market in Georgetown is still a haven for pirated VCD sellers, despite the ban.

Checks by the NST showed that traders can still be found setting up their stalls along five-foot-ways and at roadsides along Jalan Macalister, Pulau Tikus, Bayan Baru and Batu Feringghi.

The State Government had at one time proposed housing all VCD traders under one roof at the Air Itam market but the move never got off the ground.

In Kuching, pirated VCDs or CDs are available at as low as RM3 whereas a genuine one costs anything from RM15 and upwards.

Many vendors can be seen hawking their wares openly, especially at Jalan Satok.

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