

Proud of their clean Ipoh

While lauding efforts that earned Perak's capital accolades for cleanliness, the public say more can be done to improve the city

IPOH

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IPOH folk expressed surprise that their beloved city was declared the cleanest in Malaysia last year.

Urban Well-being, Housing and Local Government Minister Tan Sri Noh Omar said that Ipoh scored 97.45 in the local government authorities' rating system and also retained its five-star ranking.

Noh was speaking during the appointment of members for the state's Residents' Representatives Committees (Jawatankuasa Perwakilan Penduduk or JPP) and local government rating ceremony at the Ipoh Convention Centre.

Many of those interviewed by *MetroPerak* expressed happiness and pride that the city received the recognition and hope that both the Ipoh City Council and the public will continue ensuring that the status remains for years to come.

Panglima Lane Shophouse Owners committee chairman Dr Gurnail Singh said he had seen improvement in terms of general cleanliness in the city, but much more could be done.

"The city is not 100% clean but general cleanliness is getting better. There is also more awareness among the people about keeping their surroundings cleaner."

"We hope that this can be maintained. There's still much to be done and improvement is needed in the rubbish collection service to ensure the city retains its status," he said.

Dr Gurnail said one area that the city still needed improvement in was the cleanliness of drains.

"Drains in certain areas of the city are unbelievably dirty. Jalan Lau Ek Ching is one such place. The drains there are clogged and smelly, especially when it rains. I am proud that the drains here at Panglima Lane are fairly clean," he added.

Dr Gurnail said awareness campaigns to educate people to be civic-minded about cleanliness are needed.

"Of course, this must also go hand in hand with enforcement activities," he said.

The Ipoh City Council was also awarded five-star status, with a score of 97.45 points.

In June, Perak was also named the second cleanest state in Malaysia by the Tourism Ministry, behind Terengganu.

Ipoh City Watch president Dr Richard Ng said he understands that the city council managed to obtain its high score based on several criteria that measured cleanliness.

The criteria included strategic action plans, commitment to quality operations, innovations and creativity, use of information communications technology, integrity, good record keeping and handling of customers' complaints and feedback.

Other criteria included environment control activities, solid waste management and disposal, cleanliness of public places, handling of customers' feedback and complaints, and community involvement, which include carrying out Local Agenda 21 activities for a sustainable environment.

Ng also credited the achievement to Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Dr Zambray Abd Kadir, who spearheaded the state-level cleanliness campaign "Perak Yang Bersih" in March.

"Many critics have tried to belittle the menteri besar, labelling him the rubbish man, not realising that by going out with council workers, he was setting an example to all to take cleanliness seriously."

"I am confident Perak will soon be the cleanest state in Malaysia," he said.

Ng added that more still needs to be done by the city council and the state government.

"The city council must also ensure that all contractors appointed to work on cleanliness and waste management are monitored and their performance measured."

"The council must also make its complaints and feedback system more people friendly," he said, adding that more awareness programmes to educate the public, especially youth, on cleanliness need to be held.

He also said the city council and the state need to work together with other non-governmental organisations on more cleanliness-related initiatives.

"The KohlJau-iCycle recycling programme has played a significant role in helping the government educate the public about recycling using a social-business concept."

"The social-business concept must be supported and enhanced by getting more NGOs involved," he said.

Businesswoman Melinda Lim, in her 60s, said while it is an achievement for Ipoh and the state, the city council needs to step up its efforts to ensure other areas, apart from the city centre, are also clean.

"The city centre is indeed cleaner than before. Credit must be given where it is due."



The iconic Ipoh Padang is well maintained. — filepic

"However, there are still many illegal dumpsites in residential areas, which is something the city council often overlooks," she said.

"Are we 100% clean? Judging by the rubbish dumps found in residential areas, we are not."

"Let's just hope that the 'cleanest city' status will galvanise the city council into doing more to ensure that we really deserve it," Lim said.

Sahabat Alam Malaysia field researcher Meor Razak Meor Abdul Rahman also said that more can be done as the city could be even cleaner.

"Honestly, I am not that satisfied with the level of cleanliness in the city."

"The maintenance work is still inadequate," he said, adding that dirty and clogged drains are an issue the city council must seriously look into.

"It must be said that I've also seen some workers sweeping rubbish into the drains and have complained about it to the city council," he added.

One place that Meor Razak feels that the city council should clean up is the parking area behind the Waller Court clinic and SK Coronation Park.

"The place looks like it has not been cleaned up for a very long time. The lake at D. R. Seenivasagam Park should also be cleaned up and not left as it is now," he said.

During the event, Ipoh mayor Datuk Zamri Man thanked the people of Ipoh for recognising the council's efforts to keep the city clean.

Reminding his team not to rest on their laurels, Zamri said the council must work hard to maintain its status and also urged the public to help.

"There is no point getting five stars if the people still throw rubbish and vandalise amenities. I hope the public will work with us in making Ipoh the best city this year."

"From local government management to the people, we all have to play a key role in making this city the best," he said.



Zambray (left) and Zamri (second from left) clearing rubbish around Ipoh. Many credit the menteri besar for leading by example when it comes to cleanliness. — filepic

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