

KERATAN AKHBAR

NAMA AKHBAR: NEW STRAITS TIMES (NEWS)

TARIKH: 9 JANUARI 2020

MUKA SURAT: 11

THURSDAY, JANUARY 9, 2020 • NewStraitsTimes

Nation / NEWS

11

SMOKING BAN

EATERY OWNERS' FACES LIGHT UP

Restaurant owners, smokers welcome move to create smoking zones

ESTHER LANDAU
KUALA LUMPUR
news@nst.com.my

THE government's move to allow restaurants and eateries to build designated smoking areas 3m from their premises has been lauded by businessowners and smokers.

Restaurant operators believe the move can ease the pressure they face as a majority of their regular customers are smokers.

Malaysia Singapore Coffee Shop Proprietors' General Association president Datuk Ho Su Mong said the government should plan the move and provide guidelines for restaurant operators on suitable designs of such facilities.

"It would help solve the problem of non-smokers having to endure secondhand smoke.

"Non-smokers can avoid the designated areas. We can learn from advanced countries.

"In Japan, there are designated smoking cubicles; in Singapore, yellow boxes for smokers; and in the Netherlands big smoking zone signages.

"This is a good first step and we fully agree with the government's move.

"At least the government considers the problem from all angles," Ho said.

He said local authorities could hold discussions and dialogues with representatives of these businesses.

He said stakeholders could consider ideas such as building open air eateries that would cater only for smokers.

Malaysian Muslim Restaurant



Smokers at a designated smoking area in Santai @ Ampang in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. PIC BY AIZUDDIN SAAD

Owners Association (Presma) president Datuk Jawahar Ali Taib Khan said he had received a lot of requests from restaurant owners about setting up designated smoking areas, even before Tuesday's announcement.

"We will consider it as we have yet to be informed about the exact guidelines. It is too early to make a decision.

"But we laud the move as most of our customers are smokers," said Jawahar.

Checks by the *New Straits Times* revealed there were very few designated smoking areas for restaurant patrons in the city.

In one area in Jalan Ampang, there were only two shaded booths catering to smokers who dined at restaurants.

Some smokers, however, were happy about the prospect of having proper places to light up.

Harun Mohd Ali, 38, from Kota Baru, when met at a smoking booth in Jalan Ampang, said the

facility was not only shaded but had ashtrays for smokers.

"There is a place to sit too. I feel comfortable smoking here. The government does care about us and this is a good move."

Civil servant Meor Ahmad, 27, said the smoking zones would create more environmentally-friendly eateries.

He said non-smokers would not have to endure secondhand smoke.

Another smoker, Mohd Airil

Hanafi, 31, said having smoking zones would be good for the country's image.

"Before this, we saw that some smokers had no civic consciousness.

"They would smoke at their dining table and discard the cigarette butts and ash as they liked.

"If we adopt such bad manners in countries like Japan, it will create a bad impression of its people."