Stop feeding the rats

Hawkers, the public and city councils urged to do more

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PETALING JAYA: In the face of a mounting rat problem here and in Kuala Lumpur, especially during the Ramadan, an expert on rats has placed the responsibility of eradicating the menace squarely on city councils.

Parasitology expert Dr Siti Nursheena Mohd Zain said the only way to get rid of rats for good was to cut off their food supply.

This, she said, could be done by educating hawkers and the public on proper waste management.

"Rats live and breed wherever there is food. Since these rats can eat almost anything, it is vital that people dispose of their rubbish properly.

"During Ramadan, there are bazaars everywhere and you can see food waste strewn along the streets. People need to know the consequences of their littering," Siti Nursheena, who is also a council member of the Malaysian Parasitology and Tropical Medicine Society, told theSun.

While contractors can be seen cleaning up after street markets and hawkers, the effort does not appear to be sufficient as theSun still observed torn bags of rubbish piled up on some street corners here and in Kuala Lumpur.

Asked whether the public should be wary of consuming food from street vendors or hawkers due to the rat menace, Siti Nursheena said that as long as the food is prepared and sold in clean spaces, there should not be a problem.

It has been estimated by local biologists that the rat to human population ratio in the Klang Valley is a whopping eight rodents to every person (8:1).

“This large population coupled with the tendency for rats to live in close proximity to humans makes the danger of transmitting diseases very high,” said Siti Nursheena.

Rats are able to vector more than 70 known diseases at once and have been blamed for spreading plague.

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