

TOP NEWS

Animal shelters finding it hard to get by



Soong feeds a dog at the society's shelter in Jalan Gopeng, near Simpang Pulai. The shelter cares for nearly 230 dogs and 70 cats.

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POH — The hefty cost of living, compounded by the introduction of Goods and Services Tax, will affect the capacity of the public to donate towards animal welfare.

The increase in price of pet feed, veterinary expenses and utility charges coupled with GST is expected to affect animal welfare shelters run by voluntary associations nationwide.

A case in point is the Ipoh Society for

the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ISPCA).

The association, set up 30 years ago, has been running an animal shelter since 1997.

Its volunteers care for nearly 230 dogs and 70 cats at its premises in Jalan Gopeng, near Simpang Pulai.

Association secretary Augustina Abdullah said ISPCA spent more than RM10,000 monthly just on food.

"If we include medicine, veterinary charges, utility bills, staff salary, transport fees and many others, then the cost comes to about RM15,000 a month," she said.

"Our shelter, like every animal shelter in the country, runs on public donations

either in cash or kind like dog or cat feed and shampoo.

"With a decrease in disposable income, the amount of public donations to the shelter have also become lower. It is already tough managing a shelter on a voluntary basis, as volunteers have to fork out money to look after the animals."

Augustina said the association's budget was only enough for a month and was worried that the rising cost of living and the effect of GST would encroach into public empathy for animals.

She anticipated that other animal shelters would feel the effects too.

"While we will not shut our shelter, I cannot help but worry as we need

continued public support to look after the dogs and cats."

ISPCA president Ricky Soong said he hoped the public would continue to donate for animal charity although he was mindful GST would further erode the capacity to donate.

"This is voluntary work. We don't get donations from other sources. Malaysians have been generous in giving cash and bags of animal feed. Without their support, the animals would suffer," he said.

"We understand that Malaysians will spend less from now on but it is our ardent hope they will keep donating to animal welfare associations like the ISPCA."