

Set up animal welfare board to raise awareness

It pains me to read readers' accounts in newspapers and social media about stray dogs, including pregnant ones, and puppies being killed savagely.

There was one incident in Johor Baru earlier this year where a mother dog, her two puppies and a pregnant dog were chased, cornered and violently bashed to death with sticks by a group of foreign construction workers.

Recently, a foreign security guard was said to have bludgeoned a dog to death with a wooden bat in the car park of a mall. The poor dog was believed to be taking shelter in the basement of the shopping mall during a downpour.

The brutal killing of animals should not happen especially when they did not harm anyone. The project developer in Johor Baru and the mall management

should have sought the help of the Veterinary Services Department or animal welfare NGOs like SPCA Selangor to remove the dogs. Or they could have asked the workers or the guard to simply chase the dogs away.

Building owners, contractors and managements must instruct all their foreign workers and security guards to respect life and not to inflict cruelty on all animals.

On their part, members of the public who witness the senseless killing of dogs, cats or any animal should immediately lodge a police report. The police can take action against the perpetrator under the Penal Code. Cruelty to animals is totally unacceptable, inhuman and uncivilised. Animals have a right to live free from pain and suffering, and especially death from a vicious killing.

I would like to voice my strongest condemnation towards cruel acts against harmless animals by whoever is responsible. This is not the Malaysian way of treating animals and we have to put a stop to it.

I call on all animal activists and the relevant NGOs to come together to declare our strongest protest in the way animals are abused or killed in a barbaric way. We should demand for the enforcement of the Animal Welfare Act 2015. This law was passed by Parliament last year and was gazetted in December 2015 but has yet to be implemented.

Under the Act, a minimum fine of RM20,000 and a maximum penalty of RM100,000 fine and three-year jail sentence will be imposed on those convicted of abusing animals.

Cruelty offences stated under the law include the act of beating, muti-

lating, poisoning, confining in an area that restricts the natural movements of the animals, abandoning and allowing (by the owner) such cruelty against the animal.

I urge the Veterinary Services Department to make public the progress of the enforcement of the Act so that Malaysians know when the landmark legislation will be executed. The Animal Welfare Board should also be formed as soon as possible to raise public awareness on animal welfare and prevent the inhumane treatment of animals and pets.

Mahatma Gandhi once said: "The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated."

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