

# Vagrants make residents uneasy

By Veena Babulal  
streets@nstp.com.my

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The increasing number of vagrants hanging around Brickfields is making the community uncomfortable.

The blind, disabled and school associations are united in their call to the government to rid the area of the homeless, who they claim are drunks and display disorderly behaviour.

A SK(P) Methodist teacher said some children have to face these homeless men on their way to school.

"The children arrive by bus at the Hong Leong Bank next to the KL Sentral monorail station at 6.30am. The homeless men, who are usually drunk, will be sleeping there.

"While we haven't received any complaints on anyone being harmed or molested, the proximity between these homeless men sleeping there and the children is an invitation to trouble," he said, adding that the children also left school when it was about to get dark after 6.30pm.

The teacher was among more than 30 representatives of NGOs who attended a Brickfields Rukun Tetangga meeting here, recently.

Gobal Rajee of the Brickfields Indian Traders Association said there was an influx of drunkards loitering and sleeping on five foot ways in the area over the past three years.

"I don't know whether they are homeless because some of them speak perfect English," said Gobal.

"I've talked to City Hall, the police and the Welfare Department about them, but everyone keeps passing the buck," he said, adding that the police insist that they can only arrest a vagrant if he or she harms a person or is



Despite numerous operations, vagrants usually return to the spot where they were picked up.

a public nuisance.

He cited a recent incident when a homeless man had gone amok at the KL Sentral Monorail station.

"While the police did intervene, they initially refused to because they were not harming anyone.

"There are about five drunks there who hang around the station all day long disturbing ladies and schoolchildren."

Gobal said there were more than 10 such individuals in Brickfields.

Area B Rukun Tetangga chairman S.K.K Naidu asked for increased police presence.

There is one police beat at the Brickfields 7-Eleven outlet and an-

other two police posts.

The first post is at the Little India fountain and the second at the YMCA bus stop. A total of 10 officers have been assigned to patrol the area.

"There should at least be a permanent police station in the area. Brickfields is a business, residential and community district which is mostly made up of elderly persons, the disabled and expatriates," said Naidu.

He said the temporary relocation of the Brickfields district police to Sri Petaling would affect the area significantly.

Inspector George Nyippa, who heads the Brickfields police station,

said there must be a police station in Brickfields.

"The entire Brickfields district force had raised the inconvenience of relocation with Home Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein and the latter had agreed that he would restudy the relocation of the Brickfields district police headquarters.

He added that it was essential to have a police station in Brickfields as it was a transport and tourist hub. He said even one case would tarnish the nation's reputation.

On the vagrant issue, he admitted there was little the police could do.

"As long as they do not disturb the

peace or harm others, there is little we can do.

"Despite us rounding them up, conducting urine tests and sending them to the Welfare Department, they will soon reappear here. Sometimes, even a day after the operation," he said, adding that the same homeless individuals spotted on city roads such as Jalan Bandar and Jalan Tun H.S Lee were also here.

In the past, Brickfields was also a hotspot for drunkard youths who slept on the pavements after clubs and pubs had closed for the night.

"They were probably waiting for the LRT services to resume at 6am," he quipped.



The police can only act if vagrants commit crimes or disturb the peace.

