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'Govt cannot ban smoking in private cars'

KUALA LUMPUR: The government has no authority to ban smoking in private vehicles, said Deputy Health Minister Dr Lee Boon Chye.

He said private vehicles were personal spaces which could not be disturbed.

"We cannot bar people from smoking in private cars which are personal areas. However, parents who are driving should not smoke if there are children in the car. Parents too should ensure their children do not smoke. If the parent is driving alone, it is his or her right to smoke or otherwise," he said.

"However, public vehicles are no smoking areas as they are covered under the existing regulations," he added.

He was speaking to reporters after a tree planting programme 'Let's Go Green' organised by the Lung Foundation Malaysia (LMF) and Malaysia Forestry Research Institute (FRIM) here yesterday.

Also present were FRIM director-general Datuk Dr Abd Latif Mohmod and LFM chairman Datuk Dr Zainudin Md Zain.

Dr Lee was commenting on a

statement by Malaysia Medical Association (MMA) president Dr Mohamed Namazie Ibrahim yesterday on his proposal that the government considered an awareness campaign to ban smoking in vehicles because a group of people travelling in a vehicle would be directly exposed to cigarette smoke if one of them lighted up.

He said several countries such as Australia, Canada and France had enforced smoking ban in private vehicles, by penalising those who were smoking if there were pregnant women or children nearby.

Meanwhile, Dr Lee said 22,767 warning notices had been issued to food premises which failed to put up their no smoking signs from Jan 1 to Feb 24 nationwide.

Dr Lee said, to date, no summonses had been issued yet but the ministry planned to do so on premises flouting the stipulated law from July. — Bernama

Dr Lee (right) plants a tree during 'Let's Go Green' programme. — Bernama photo

