

Hikers adjust to new norm at Bukit Wawasan

METRO NEWS

Monday, 29 Jun 2020

By **OH ING YEEN**



Ng (left, holding megaphone) urging hikers at Bukit Wawasan to follow guidelines under the new norm. — CHAN TAK KONG/The Star

There was a long line of hikers at the entrance of Bukit Wawasan in Puchong waiting for their turn to enter the hiking trail.

The queue did not deter hiking enthusiasts who have waited three months for restrictions to be eased.

Hikers need to register their details and have their temperatures checked before being allowed in in groups of 10 at a time.

A sign notified visitors that hiking is allowed from 8am to 3.30pm and those under 12 years old are not allowed to enter.

Taman Bukit Puchong resident Lee Chan Lai, who returned to hike there since it was allowed on June 15, said he waited in line for about 45 minutes last Sunday.

“It is actually better with the new guidelines as people enter in batches so there’s social distancing,” he said. Raj Islam, who lived at the nearby Pangsapuri Sri Pulai, has been looking forward to hiking up the hill for the first time since the movement control order (MCO) was implemented on March 18.

He used to hike almost daily prior to the MCO.

“I like hiking here, the air is good and I like being out in nature. It is also a good way to lose weight.

“It is not an easy trail to hike though,” he said.

Persatuan Komuniti Hutan Wawasan Selangor volunteers and the police were on hand to ensure hikers followed the standard operating procedure (SOP).

Persatuan Komuniti Hutan Wawasan Selangor chairman Chow Kean Fatt said records showed there were 655 hikers on Saturday.

“Before the MCO, there used to be more hikers, about 1,000 per day on weekends,” he said.

DSP Pung Hing Chong from IPD Serdang’s crime prevention and community safety department reminded hikers that it was a forest reserve, not a recreational forest, so picnics were not allowed.

Under Section 47 (1) and Section 47 (4) of the National Forestry Act 1984, those who violate the rules can face a fine of not more than RM30,000 and/or jailed up to five years, he said, adding that he was satisfied with the hikers’ compliance to the SOP.

Selangor local government, public transport and new village development committee chairman Ng Sze Han, who was there for a site visit yesterday morning, urged hikers at Bukit Wawasan to follow the guidelines under the new norm so that it would not be closed to the public like what has happened to Broga Hill due to overcrowding.

“I am pleased to see that the situation is under control here and hikers line up in an orderly fashion to enter,” he said.