Greening plans need a boost

I REFER to the letter “Greening our mosques” (The Star, Aug 24).

The points raised and suggestions made by the writer, Dr Zorina Khalid, chairperson of the Malaysian Nature Society Negeri Sembilan-Melaka Branch, are not only applicable to mosques but also to everyone and other institutions like schools, colleges, other places of worship, community health, hospitals and private organisations.

Environmentally sustainable architecture to maximise use of natural light, ventilation and rainwater besides recycling and reusing are necessary to manage global warming and human sustainability. Therefore, incentives provided for installation of solar panels for generating electricity, and rain harvesting systems for water conservation should be actively promoted by the authorities.

I am a member of a mosque management committee and also involved in other organisations where I have been trying hard to promote specific initiatives like installing solar panels which not only generate free electricity and reduce costs but also provide additional revenue from the excess power into the central/national grid through Tenaga Nasional. Reducing the usage of air conditioners especially on cooler and rainy days and opening the windows for fresh air are other initiatives I am promoting.

However, I encounter much apathy and disinterest among committee members in these attempts.

It would be good if central bodies like the state Islamic departments/councils such as the Selangor Islamic Religious Department (JAIS), Negeri Sembilan Islamic Religious Council (MAINS), etc, institutionalise these ideas into guidelines for mosques and surau.

The Education and Health Ministries should also work on guidelines for schools, learning institutions and hospitals as the potential impact of greening these organisations is immense for the community, country and the world in general. Who knows, other countries may follow successful Malaysian initiatives in workable, ecofriendly and sustainable ways.

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