



Persatuan Pengguna Pulau Pinang Consumers Association of Penang

檳城消費人協會 பிளாங்கு பயனீட்டாளர் சங்கம்

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Letter to the Editor

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Fine line between freak accident and negligence

Within the past few days there have been a few accidents that have taken place involving construction sites and construction equipment. Thankfully the people involved in all these accidents managed to narrowly escape with their lives. However, the Consumers' Association of Penang (CAP) is appalled that these accidents even happened in the first place.

Every time there is an accident we ask why it happened. Was it a freak accident or negligence? If it was negligence then negligence on whose part? Was it the developer, the contractors, construction workers; was it the authorities themselves?

A thorough investigation must be conducted by the authorities to ascertain the cause of all those accidents. Did the accidents happen because...

- the developer hired the cheapest contractors without checking credentials and work ethics
- the contractors may have hired the cheapest labour they could find, meaning unskilled foreign workers
- the contractors skimped on building materials to cut cost
- the equipment used at the construction sites may also no longer be fit for use or perhaps is not yet totally useless but already failing and thus dangerous
- the construction workers were not provided with proper personal protection equipment (PPE)
- the construction workers were provided with the adequate PPE but the supervisor did not enforce actually using them
- there was no supervisor at the worksite

One thing is for sure, the policies currently in place and action being taken by the relevant authorities, when it comes to accidents in the construction industry, are just not deterrent enough. As such, history keeps repeating itself.

We implore, as we have many times before, the relevant authorities to take serious action against the parties responsible in the recent accident. If the current laws do not allow the authorities to be as strict as they need to be then the laws should be amended.

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