



Persatuan Pengguna Pulau Pinang Consumers Association of Penang

檳城消費人協會 பிளாங்கு பயனீட்டாளர் சங்கம்

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Press Statement

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CAP: Make Balik Kampung Experience Safe

Malaysians are currently in the midst of another round of Balik Kampung mode. Consumers' Association of Penang (CAP) urges both motorists as well as transport authorities to take all necessary measures to avoid needless deaths on our roads.

The Police have reported more than 20,000 road accidents during every Operation Selamat campaigns, conducted during the festival seasons. They expect approximately 4 million vehicles to be on the road during the two-week campaign period till 12 June 2019.

Motorcyclists make up 63% of road accidents. More than 40% of these motorcycle accidents occur along rural, town and federal roads rather than highways. This is because many of the people in these localities ride motorcycles without licence and safety helmets, as their level of safety awareness is low.

In the meanwhile, PUSPAKOM was reported to have said that about 9 million private cars might have brake and sideslip problems. Therefore, vehicle owners should not compromise on safety by investing in cheap replacement parts or neglecting service.

The Public Works Department had reported that retreaded tyres have caused approximately 10,000 accidents either directly from the tyres peeling off, or from the tyre debris on the roads. The retread industry retorted to this statement and claimed that retreaded tyres are as safe as new tyres and that it was illegally retreaded tyres that caused problems. If the authorities are unable to stop the manufacture of illegal retreaded tyres, then they should ban retreaded tyres all together.

A few days back a bus was reported to have gone up in flames near Johor. This is not an isolated case, as such incidents are becoming common. This is an indication that commercial vehicle operators are not doing enough to maintain their vehicles in conformance to ICOP SHE regulations.

The spectre of road fatalities in Malaysia has become so serious that it is akin to a life-threatening illness like cancer. It can hit anyone. Practically everyone on the road is a potential victim. Unlike cancer however, there is no recourse for treatment for a road fatality after it has happened. Unfortunately, we Malaysians do not take this matter seriously. We are largely apathetic to the problem and are not sensitive enough to our people dying on the roads like mosquitoes.

There are many factors involved in road accidents. Therefore, all sectors should play their part and take positive steps to avoid accidents.

First of all motorists should be fresh before they begin their journey. They should not begin when they are tired or towards the end of their fast. They should break their journey as soon as they experience tiredness or feel sleepy.

Enforcement has got to be stepped up at all levels. The Police have given a stern warning to motorists to heed their call for safe driving, or pay fines. We hope the Police will keep to this warning and not give discounts for fines later.

The long term solution is to improve public transport such as express buses and trains services. Of late trains services have become popular, which is a positive sign. However, for passengers travelling from Penang Island it is very inconvenient as they have to cross the sea and walk long distances with their baggage. Rapid Bus should consider providing a shuttle bus service from the Sungei Nibong Bus Terminal to the Butterworth or Bukit Mertajam Railway Station:-

CAP recommends the following measures be taken:-

- 1) Motorists should conform to road safety regulations and drive carefully, without taking risks or drive when tired or sleepy;
- 2) The enforcement authorities should be tough and firm. They should not offer discounts for fines later;
- 3) Authorities should address the problems related to the retreaded tyre industry;
- 4) Tighten enforcement on motorcyclists using rural, federal and town roads;
- 5) Ensure that bus operators comply with the ICOP SHE regulations, with buses properly maintained and drivers strictly managed;
- 6) For the long term, the authorities should provide convenient and affordable public transport.

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