



Persatuan Pengguna Pulau Pinang Consumers Association of Penang

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Press Statement

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BIG TRAFFIC NIGHTMARE IN LITTLE INDIA

It is most unfortunate that the City Council of Penang Island (MBPP) thought that it is alright to rob the rights of road users in the name of celebrating a festival at Little India. MBPP ought to ask itself how necessary and beneficial is this idea of pitching canopies on both sides of the road to the people.

The Consumers' Association of Penang (CAP) would reiterate that it sees no purpose of these shops extending out almost to the middle of the narrow roads with their canopies since these very shops displayed the products within their premises. Had the enforcement been even handed in banning the use of canopies then there should be no issue at all.

Moreover, MBPP Traffic and Infrastructure Committee alternate chairman Nur Zarina Zakaria should also consider the fact that some of the canopies had been erected about two to three weeks ago and this started a month-long nightmare for pedestrians and motorists. Apparently not much thought was put into the decision as the consequences are the obstruction of traffic and pedestrians.

Pedestrians have been forced to walk on the road because five-footways have been obstructed by permanent fixtures and furniture by certain shops. Deprived of the choice to use five-footways, pedestrians have to share whatever left of the narrow roads with motor vehicles under all weather conditions. Little India is absolutely not pedestrian-friendly at all.

Little India is not a proud example to showcase as it runs against the grain of safe pedestrian-friendly street concept that the State Government has been advocating.

Did MBPP anticipate the event of a fire or medical emergency? How would an ambulance or fire engine manoeuvre in this tight squeeze? The MBPP should take all factors into consideration before granting the shops permission to erect the canopies.

Undeniably, there is traffic chaos as pedestrians have to squeeze between cars and the canopies, only to be made worse when vans or lorries stopped to load/unload goods. Vehicles would be caught in a gridlock until these commercial vehicles move.

CAP observes that the situation has not been this bad in the past years. It also fears that this knee-jerk decision to permit canopies on the road might be a precedent for other festivals and celebrations that Malaysia is never short of.

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