



Persatuan Pengguna Pulau Pinang Consumers Association of Penang

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Letter to editor

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CAP: Fix deficiencies in road transport system without delays

It is more than two years since the Advisory Panel of the Genting Highlands crash submitted 51 recommendations to the Ministry of Transport in order to improve the national road safety system holistically. Frequent public and commercial vehicle crashes are an indication of serious flaws and deficiencies in the road transport systems which have been ignored for too long. Meanwhile, Consumers' Association of Penang (CAP) has been consistently questioning the delays and flip-flops and lack of urgency exhibited by the authorities.

Vehicles speeding and losing control owing to brake failure has become a common news item these days. The recent case of the runaway bus near the Menora Tunnel and the bus with tourists from China which overturned at Genting Highlands are recent examples.

One of the recommendations of the Genting Highlands Advisory Panel was the implementation of proper management strategies suitable for hilly terrain. This included the review and gazetting of speed limit and vehicle weight limit on hilly roads, including private roads with public access.

Furthermore, appropriate traffic calming devices and warning signs were required to be installed to slow down vehicles and convey safety warning messages effectively. Have these been put in place?

The authorities spent too much time flip-flopping on the decision to install either speed limiters or GPS in commercial and public vehicles to control speed. After a long delay the decision was made recently, but many transport operators have yet to conform to the requirement. How long more do we need to wait for full conformance?

We still do not observe age limit for buses. We have many aged vehicles on our roads and they are like time bombs. They have the potential for brake failure owing to fatigue.

Old buses also do not conform to UN Regulations for body construction. Moreover, the plan to install seat belts in buses seems to have been put in the back burner.

It is very doubtful that safety checks are made on buses before every trip as claimed by transport operators. If so who is ensuring that this procedure is being followed faithfully?

CAP urges the transport authorities to ensure full implementation of the following without further delays:

1. The 51 recommendations by the Genting Advisory Panel;
2. Proper management strategies for hilly terrain such as the speed limit and weight limit for vehicles;
3. Traffic calming devices and warning signs to slow down traffic suitable for hilly terrain;

4. Installation of speed limiters;
5. Fix suitable age limit for buses;
6. Ensure buses conform to UN Regulations for body construction and that seat belts are installed.
7. Ensure all operators of public transport implement ICOP SHE program which will ensure buses are tested before every trip.

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