



Persatuan Pengguna Pulau Pinang Consumers Association of Penang

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Press Release

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Save the marine lives with eco-friendly light lanterns at Teluk Bahang Floating Chariot Procession

Consumers Association of Penang (CAP), Penang Green Council (PGC), Malaysia Hindu Sangam Bukit Bendera Council (MHS) and Temple Management of Sri Singamuga Kalliamman, Teluk Bahang urge the devotees not to use any kind of synthetic foam material during the celebration of Masi Maga Theppa Thiruvizha a floating chariot festival which is celebrated on 17th February this year at Teluk Bahang, Penang.

The Floating Chariot Procession celebrated at 115 years old Singamuga Kalliamman Temple in in Teluk Bahang is a seaside festival, which attracts thousands of devotees yearly to the temple. A floating chariot decorated with lights and flowers carrying temple deities will be going for a tour in the sea during this festival.

It has been a tradition of this temple; thousands of devotees set decorated lights lanterns to float after making a wish during the chariot tour. These decorated lights are fixed on styrofoam and polystyrene materials of their lightweight and floating nature. Lightweight and afloat styrofoam and polystyrene easily travels on the seawater.

In the past, hundreds of synthetic foam based materials have been seen floating on the sea the next day after the procession. Foam and plastic materials are known as major sea polluters in which threatens the sea lives.

Styrofoam and polystyrene are non-biodegradable and can break down into smaller pieces. These are ingested mistakenly as food by marine life such as fish and turtles harming or killing them.

As a result of the impacts on marine pollution and adverse effect on marine wildlife, CAP, PGC, MHS Bukit Bendera Council and the Temple management take this opportunity to appeal to the devotees to abstain from styrofoam or any type of polystyrene and plastic base materials for light lanterns.

About two to three decades ago these lanterns were fixed on layers of banana tree stems which has floating nature and eventually it gets biodegraded in the sea. The temple management has been promoting environmentally friendly alternatives in the past years and this year again the temple is arranging for eco friendly alternatives.

Therefore CAP together with PGC, MHS Bukit Bendera Council and Temple management urging the devotees to go for safer and environment friendly alternatives such as plate made of betel nuts trees, banana tree stems as light lantern. A devotional deed accompanied with environment friendly approaches will make the floating festival will be more meaningful for devotees while fulfilling their wishes.

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