



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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Another road carnage during this Hari Raya?

We are at the threshold of another balik kampung frenzy to get home at all costs. For many families it will be a period of great rejoicing during the coming Hari Raya. However, joy and happiness can suddenly change to extreme sorrow and agony for those who lose their loved ones in road crashes which spares nobody. Although Ops Selamat 9 will be in full swing, how much can we expect from the operation?

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According to the IGP, during Ops Sikap ten years ago, the average death rate was 17.2 per day. In the last Hari Raya, during the Ops Selamat period in 2015, the figure went up to 22, much higher than the average 18 deaths per day during normal days. 1,450 crashes per day were reported during the same period, as compared with 1,300 crashes per day during normal days. The highest death toll was on Municipal and Federal roads. Motorcyclists contributed to 60% of road deaths.

Over the last 10 years our population increased by 16.8% to 31.2 million, but our vehicle population increased by 4 times that much (66.8%) to 26.6 million.

When lawlessness on the road is a norm, how can the authorities expect to teach about road safety over a short 15-day period when the Ops Sikap and Ops Selamat of the past have not proven to be effective enough?

We applaud the introduction of new train services from north to south along the west coast to encourage the use of public transport. However, the fares for trains, buses and taxis have gone up steeply. Moreover, with the unreliable ferry service and the long walk, it is a big hassle for people in Penang Island to catch a train at Butterworth train station. How will all this encourage the public to opt for public transport?

CAP recommends the following measures to improve road safety during balik kampung periods:

- * Increase the “Perception of Being Caught” by increasing enforcement, especially along municipal and federal roads (where most accidents occur) and implement Automatic Enforcement System without further delay.

More public announcements and campaigns should be made, warning motorists of the police operations and the strict enforcement of traffic laws.

- * Slow down traffic, especially at the hot spots (where crashes occur) and populated areas along the municipal and federal roads. This can be done by making more speed humps accompanied by rumble strips.
- * For offences related to speed and reckless driving which result in serious crashes, the motorists should be immediately made to do social service such as cleaning roads and public toilets for a week, apart from the summons and related charges.
- * All public vehicles should be subjected to rigorous mechanical checks before departure. The drivers of these vehicles must undergo checks to ensure that they are not drug addicts, have no traffic summonses and have good road safety records.
- * Use of rear seatbelts should be enforced.
- * All drivers should have proper sleep and rest before driving and avoid travelling during graveyard hours.
- * Follow the travel time advisory by toll operators.
- * Avoid texting and talking on mobile phone.

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