



Persatuan Pengguna Pulau Pinang Consumers Association of Penang

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Press Statement

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Break Fewer Coconuts during Thaipusam, Channel the Money Saved to the Needy Instead

Consumers Association of Penang (CAP) urges devotees celebrating Thaipusam on January 25th to break fewer coconuts due to a shortage of coconuts which will result in even pricier coconuts this year. Devotees are encouraged to channel the money intended to be spent on breaking extra coconuts to needy Indian communities, especially those in the B40 group.

In CAP's recent random price survey of coconuts for the 2024 Thaipusam, sellers claimed that there is less coconut supply this year. To verify this, we contacted coconut plantation operators in Bagan Datoh, Perak who claimed that coconut trees bear fewer fruits this time. It is believed that extreme weather conditions could be one of the important factors for the drop in yield.

Breaking coconuts during Thaipusam is a cleansing ritual practised by Hindu devotees. It is a symbolic representation of surrendering one's ego at the feet of God which is done with full determination and devotion. The broken coconuts are then collected and the flesh is either eaten raw or used for cooking. Such is the beauty of the Hindu religious practices which ensure that food is not wasted. In the Hindu tradition, any food item offered to God should be treated as prasadam and is to be consumed by devotees and not discarded as waste.

Coconut is used in every Hindu religious ceremony due to its high level of nutrients. Contrary to the popular notion that coconut has a high level of cholesterol and should be abstained, Hindus regularly use coconuts in their cooking and as a treatment for a variety of ailments. The coconut is also a fruit revered by Hindus in their religious ceremonies.

Many devotees, particularly from the Chinese community, are ill-informed about the real reasons behind the coconut-breaking ceremony. They mistakenly think that the more coconuts they break, the more luck is showered upon them. Hence thousands of coconuts are broken every year which ultimately end up in the landfill and are burned, turning into gases that pollute the environment. This very act itself is not godly or practical.

Breaking coconuts, which has been ingrained in every Hindu's heart, should be implemented in the right manner – by breaking just one coconut, which should be done with full devotion.

Spending money on thousands of coconuts is not wise, especially in the current economic situation. Moreover, as is typically the case, the price of coconuts is expected to increase during the Thaipusam celebrations. The market price of coconut is RM1.60 per fruit. During Thaipusam, the price can go up to RM2.20, or even RM2.50 per fruit.

Hindu devotees are urged to give a deep thought on the matter, and to follow the right religious practices. Set a good example when breaking coconuts this Thaipusam and become a good role model for the younger generation of Hindus.

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