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AIRPLANE ATTRACTION ... An aerial photo showing a decommissioned aircraft at a construction site being repurposed as a tourist attraction near a theme park in Alor Gajah, Malacca yesterday. — AFP/IC

Enforce the law

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PETALING JAYA: A transport expert has called on the authorities to enforce traffic regulations against motorcyclists to break their bad habits and lower their death rates on the road.

Universiti Sains Malaysia School of Civil Engineering (Transport Engineering) lecturer Prof Dr Ahmad Farhan Mohd Sadullah said the matter is urgent, considering motorcyclists accounted for 70 out of every 100 road deaths in Malaysia as of August 2021.

"Unlicensed motorcyclists in the country learn bad habits since childhood when parents allow them to ride their machines around their housing estates and villages.

"Even enforcement officers look on smilingly when they see children riding around their housing estates. The fact that no action is taken emboldens them to act as they wish.

"Breaking the law becomes just a normal practice for them.

"As children and teenagers learn to ride their motorcycles illegally, it is obvious that they are not trained on safety measures, traffic regulations, or on how to properly ride their machines.

"The bad habits they pick up as children and teenagers translate to bad roadside manners and attitudes, which is

► Poor traffic enforcement, bad habits learned from childhood cause of high motorcyclist fatalities: Expert

why so many of them die on our roads," Ahmad Farhan said.

As of August 2021, a total of 89,953 motorcyclists have died on Malaysian roads, with teenagers and adults aged 15 to 34 making up most deaths by age group.

In 2020, there were a total of 4,634 fatalities due to road crashes, with 3,118 (67%) involving motorcyclists.

Ahmad Farhan said motorcyclists only follow the rules to obtain a licence, after which the law becomes irrelevant.

"They will not follow them in their daily lives, which is the root cause of our (high) accident rates."

He said the authorities must strictly enforce traffic regulations involving motorcyclists to correct their bad habits as the problem has been going on for over 20 years.

Universiti Putra Malaysia Road Safety Research Centre head Assoc Prof Dr Law Teik Hua said it is easy for motorcyclists to beat traffic lights as their machines generally have low horsepower but high torque and can speed up very fast.

He said the lack of enforcement, which is at a low level, allows motorcyclists to make

such reckless decisions.

"If enforcement is stepped up, it will force motorcyclists to keep within the traffic rules, and as more of them do so, it will be awkward for others to break the law.

"Education about road safety must be stepped up and young children need to learn about the dangers they will face if they continue to ignore the regulations."

Law said enforcement officers can use the latest technology by making motorcyclists aware that they can swoop on them at any place or time.

Although there are specific lanes for them, most motorcyclists prefer to use the main roads as they are newer and well built, while motorcycle lanes are over 40 years old.

He reiterated the lack of enforcement activity also plays a part in why they do not use the motorcycle lanes.

"The government must actively begin building more segregated motorcycle lanes and warn motorcyclists to use them or face the consequences," he said.

