

STRICTER RULES AND MORE FUNDING NEEDED

Absence of separate lane for cyclists compromises safety of road users, says expert

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MALAYSIA should consider enforcing stricter regulations and investing in dedicated cycling lanes, said a transport safety expert.

Universiti Putra Malaysia Road Safety Research Centre head Associate Professor Dr Law Teik Hua said the absence of separate infrastructure for cyclists not only endangers them, but compromises the safety of other road

users, especially on high-speed highways.

"In Singapore and many European countries, cyclists are prohibited from using expressways.

"Governments there have invested in dedicated cycling lanes that offer a safe alternative without compromising the long-distance experience often sought out by recreational cyclists.

"Malaysia should follow this approach by creating safe, parallel lanes for cyclists that do not interfere with main road traffic."

Law said this following a recent viral video showing a group of cyclists confronting a bus driver after alleging that the latter tried to run over them at the roadside.

The incident reportedly occurred at Km23 of Jalan Kuala Selangor-Kuala Lumpur, heading towards Sungai Buloh, after the Batu Arang traffic light junction in Kuala Selangor.

Police said they were looking for the cyclists to investigate

whether they were obstructing traffic.

Law said the government should also consider banning cyclists from using highways and high-speed roads unless they were participating in officially sanctioned events.

"Highways are specifically designed for high-speed motor traffic and do not take into account the vulnerability of cyclists.

"Large-scale cycling events should only be held with proper supervision, planned safety measures and preferably in consultation with traffic enforcement agencies. This is standard practice in other countries, where large cycling events are strictly controlled, and unsupervised access to expressways is never permitted."

He added that while cyclists had the same rights as other road users, their presence on highways designed for speeds over 110kph could pose serious



A bicycle lane in Kuala Lumpur. NSTP FILE PIC

safety risks.

"As much as cyclists deserve to be acknowledged as road users, their safety — and the safety of others — requires a more structured and controlled approach to where and how they ride.

"High-speed highways are neither suitable nor safe for uncon-

trolled cycling activities.

"A combination of strict regulation, enforcement, public education and infrastructure investment is needed to allow cycling to flourish as a healthy and sustainable mode of transport without compromising road safety," Law said.