

KUALA LUMPUR, FEB. 21 (BERNAMA) -- THE SENATE THIS EVENING PASSED THE ROAD TRAFFIC AND MOTOR VEHICLES (STATES OF MALAYA, SARAWAK AND SABAH) (AMENDMENT) BILL WHICH ENHANCES THE PENALTY FOR TRAFFIC OFFENCES.

THE BILL, MOVED BY THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS, TAN SRI SARDON BIN HAJI JUBIR, ENHANCES THE PENALTY FOR OFFENCES INCLUDING SPEEDING, AND PROVIDES FOR THE SUSPENSION OF MOTOR VEHICLE LICENCES.

THE AMENDMENTS IN THE BILL, TAN SRI SARDON SAID, MADE A TWO-PRONGED ATTACK ON DRIVERS AT LARGE AND OWNERS OF COMMERCIAL VEHICLES SUCH AS LORRIES, VANS, TAXIS AND BUSES.

DURING THE DEBATE, SENATOR (DR) MAHATHIR MOHAMED CALLED FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW ROAD SYSTEM WITH HIGHWAYS BY-PASSING MAJOR TOWNS.

HE SAID THE CAUSE OF THE RISING NUMBER OF ACCIDENTS WAS NOT ONLY DUE TO CARELESS DRIVERS BUT ALSO BECAUSE OF THE ABSENCE OF GOOD ROADS. - BERNAMA MORE 1906/HS

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DR. MAHATHIR DESCRIBED MOST OF THE EXISTING ROADS AS BULLOCK-CART ROADS WHICH HAD BEEN TARRED BUT STILL RETAINED THE INNUMERABLE NUMBER OF BENDS.

HE SUGGESTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT INTRODUCE TOLLS TO RECOVER THE MONEY SPENT ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF ROADS.

HE ADDED THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD ALLOW PRIVATE COMPANIES TO BUILD ROADS AND BRIDGES IN AREAS WHERE THE GOVERNMENT WAS NOT ABLE TO PROVIDE SUCH FACILITIES.

HE SAID THE COMPANIES SHOULD THEN BE ALLOWED TO COLLECT TOLLS FOR SOME TIME BEFORE HANDING THEM OVER TO THE GOVERNMENT.

THE SENATOR ADDED THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE PRIVATE SECTOR WAS PREPARED TO CONSTRUCT A BRIDGE LINKING PENANG ISLAND WITH THE MAINLAND IF IT WAS ALLOWED TO LEVY TOLLS FOR 15 YEARS. - BERNAMA MORE 1910/HS

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HE ALSO CALLED FOR THE STANDARDISATION OF ROAD SIGNS AND MILESTONES IN ALL STATES SO AS NOT TO CONFUSE TRAVELLERS.

SENATOR WONG SENG CHOW CALLED FOR A MENTAL REVOLUTION, AMONG ROAD USERS SO THAT THEY COULD EXERCISE MORE CARE WHILE DRIVING.

HE CALLED ON THE GOVERNMENT TO INVESTIGATE REPORTS OF KOPI O LICENCES AND URGED STRICTER TESTS FOR LEARNER DRIVERS.

SENATOR WONG ASKED FOR ACTION TO BE TAKEN AGAINST MOTORISTS WHO REGARDED THE HIGHWAYS AS RACE TRACKS.

HE SAID THE IMPOSING OF STIFFER FINES AND CANCELLATION OF DRIVING LICENCES WERE NOT SUFFICIENT.

DRIVERS WHO CAUSE DEATHS ON THE ROADS SHOULD BE CONVICTED AS MURDERERS. - BERNAMA MORE 1912/HS

SENATE-SARDON 4 KUALA LUMPUR

SENATOR SHAARI JUSOH SAID THAT DRIVERS FOUND GUILTY OF CAUSING ACCIDENTS SHOULD BE PENALISED ACCORDING TO THE SIZE OF THEIR VEHICLES.

HE ALSO ASKED THAT THE PEOPLE BE GIVEN TAXI LICENCES OR ALLOWED TO RUN BUS SERVICES ALONG NEW ROADS TO KAMPONGS.

SENATOR DR. LIM AH SITT SUGGESTED THAT LICENCES FOR BICYCLES BE ISSUED YEARLY.

SENATOR DATUK MANSUR MAHMUD SUGGESTED THAT A VOLUNTARY +FLYING SQUAD+ COMPRISING MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT AND SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS BE FORMED TO STOP AND NOTE DOWN SPEEDING VEHICLES.

SENATOR DATUK NAIK HASSAN YAHYA ALLEGED THAT CORRUPTION WAS BEING PRACTISED AT ROAD BLOCKS AND WAS WORRIED THAT WITH THE AMENDMENTS MORE CORRUPTION WOULD BE PRACTISED. - BERNAMA MORE 1930/HS

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SENATOR ISMAIL SHEIKH IBRAHIM URGED THAT STIFFER PENALTIES BE IMPOSED ON DRIVERS WHO DRINK.

WINDING UP THE DEBATE, TAN SRI SARDON SAID THE CO-OPERATION OF ALL WAS NEEDED TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF ACCIDENTS.

HE ADDED THAT THE ROAD SAFETY COUNCIL OF MALAYSIA WAS WORKING WITH THE EDUCATION MINISTRY TO TEACH SCHOOLCHILDREN ROAD SAFETY AND TRAFFIC RULES.

THE MINISTER SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD NO INTENTION TO LEVY TOLLS ON ROADS AND BRIDGES AS LONG AS THERE WERE OTHER ALTERNATIVES. - BERNAMA 1930/HS

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