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Time to seriously educate people on safe driving

Lee Lam Thye

THE most heartbreaking and tragic news that was highlighted in the media during the double festival celebration was the road carnage which left more than 307 people dead and more than 2,200 injured since Ops Statik commenced on Jan 21.

Despite the various measures undertaken by the authorities, including media campaigns, road accidents continue to occur and lives continue to be lost.

Nothing seems to be potent enough to make our road users, particularly motorcyclists, realise the importance of road safety.

Even the exhortations by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad have not deterred those whose cavalier attitude has not only caused the loss of their lives but also those of law-abiding road users.

Dr Mahathir's comment on the dangerous riding behaviour of motorcyclists was shared by many.

I subscribe to Federal Traffic Police Chief SAC (I) Datuk Supian Amat's view that if our drivers and motorcyclists continue to be kiasu (someone who does not want to lose out) we will have many more orphans and widows.

Many victims are teenagers and do not consider the agony their families suffer if an accident occurs.

According to Supian, police are worried over the rising number of accidents and stresses that enforcement alone is not enough to check the problem.

Indeed the authorities appear to be fighting a losing battle. All the campaigns cautioning motorists and motorcyclists to be careful have obviously fallen on deaf ears.

The time has come for all those involved in road safety to conduct a serious reappraisal of the various measures to deal with the problem.

It is obvious that enforcement alone is not sufficient. It is high time that road safety campaigns be introduced in schools to instil a deeper sense of responsibility in the young and educate them to be more disciplined road users.

Safe driving should be viewed with greater seriousness by the authorities. It should be made an integral part of all occupational safety and health training programmes. Defensive driving courses should be organised and made available to car drivers.

As for motorcyclists, practical training programmes should be drawn up to help them to be more careful riders.

It has been pointed out recently by an expert in motoring skills that more than 95 per cent of Malaysian motorcyclists do not have adequate training to be on the road.

Road safety depends on the adoption of proper attitudes by motorists and motorcyclists who value their lives and those of their loved ones.

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