

Guan Eng: Make public bridge fire investigation
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The Penang government wants the investigation into the TNB power cables that caused the Penang Bridge fire to be made public.

It says that TNB must ensure that such incidents are not repeated, and wants all relevant agencies to fully review their contingency plans to alleviate traffic problems when such emergencies arise.

Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng (right), who is overseas in China, expressed deep concern about the incident which happened yesterday morning on the second day of the Hari Raya Aidilfitri holidays.

Three power cables under the bridge had caught fire causing massive traffic jams stretching several kilometres on both sides of the bridge.

According to the chief minister, Penang police chief Ayub Yaakob had also assured him that the cause of the fire was suspected overheating of the TNB power cables and had ruled out foul play.

Lim in a statement issued by his press secretary today said he appreciated the efforts of state public works, utilities and transportation committee chairman Lim Hock Seng in managing the situation, and of TNB' swift response to restore power supply within five minutes via an alternative power source.

Hock Seng told AFP yesterday that the fire started under the 13.5-kilometre bridge caught fire at 10.40am, causing one of the bridge's three lanes to be shut, delaying revellers travelling to meet friends and relatives.

penang bridge is burning" There is a lot of black smoke coming from under the bridge as the cable is still burning and is not accessible from the top side, so we are waiting for fireboats to arrive and put out the flames," he said at the time.

The public works chairman added that the fire did not pose any structural danger to the bridge and that it was still safe for traffic.

Lim also said that the four kilometre-long traffic congestion on either side of the bridge was caused by motorists stopping to look at the fire and the firefighting operations, while officials urged the vehicles to move on.

Repairs to cost over RM5 mil

Meanwhile, Bernama reported that TNB chief executive officer and president Che Khalib Mohamad Noh visited the site of the incident this evening.

Che Khalib said TNB has yet to identify the cause of the fire and that the result of the investigation would be made known to the public soon.

He told Bernama that the repair costs is expected to be more than RM5 million, and includes the installation of new cables.

He assured that repair work will only be carried out between midnight and 5am, to avoid traffic congestion.

"We can assure that there will not be any interruption of electricity supply following the high voltage cable fire...and we apologize to our customers who were affected," he said.

The TNB chief also assured that there will be enough electricity supply to Penang, especially for the industrial sector, as its source of supply comes from several sources outside Seberang Perai, as well as from the Gelugor and Juru power stations.

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