



Many of the plastic bollards are gone from Kuala Lumpur's bicycle lanes (in blue) on both sides of the street, exposing cyclists to passing vehicles. — LOW BOON TAT/The Star

DBKL urged to engage with cycling community

IT IS still not fully safe yet to cycle in Kuala Lumpur city centre, say cyclists.

Elena Mei Yun, who cycles from Jalan Desa Pandan to Jalan Raja Laut for work every day, shared with *StarMetro* her experience of cycling in the city.

"There was one time where a motorcycle nearly crashed into my bicycle.

"I am also often harassed by motorcyclists, calling me to stay off the roads.

"The buses are also moving very fast right beside me, leaving me little space. This is especially rampant in Jalan Ampang.

"In some parts of the city, the drain covers are parallel to the tires of my bicycle, which pose a great risk," she highlighted.

Mei noted that bicycle lanes in the downtown area lacked maintenance and were often used by other vehicles.

"Kuala Lumpur car-free Sundays seem like the only effort to promote cycling awareness in the city currently. More needs to be done to raise awareness.

"The authorities should also do more wayfinding between city and suburban areas to guide those trying to shift away from driving," she added.

Another cyclist, Emi Norazalli said public awareness about the importance of bicycle lanes was still low.

"It is not uncommon to see vehicles parked on these lanes, obstructing cyclists and defeating the purpose of having dedicated paths.

"This happens quite often in Jalan Ampang, especially in the evening.

"Sometimes, children are even seen sitting on folding chairs inside the lanes.

"This showed a lack of respect and understanding of shared road spaces," said Emi, who cycles at least five times a week for leisure.

He also questioned the planning and designing processes as he pointed out the physical obstacles such as poles, signboards and trees in some of the lanes, making them unsafe for cyclists.

"Reckless motorists are also a problem.

"Some of them overtake us aggressively without signalling,



Emi says there should be an app for cyclists to plan safe routes, report hazards and provide feedback. — Courtesy photo

forcing us to make sudden stops or sharp turns to avoid them.

"Some of my cyclist friends have also encountered stray dogs that chased after them, which would cause my friends to swerve and lose balance," he added.

Emi said Kuala Lumpur's bicycle lanes lacked connectivity too, making it hard for cyclists to commute on them effectively.

To address these issues, he urged the authorities to organise more public awareness campaigns to educate the people about the importance of bicycle lanes and encourage respectful usage as well as ensuring the lanes were interconnected and free of obstacles.

"The authorities should start focusing on improving infrastructure and be more thoughtful in urban planning, like using visible road markings and signs to alert motorists to the shared spaces.

"They can also consider establishing car-free areas where only cyclists and pedestrians are allowed.

"They should also take part in more cycling community activities, to not only foster collaboration but also to identify the issues and solutions," he said.

Emi added that there should be a mobile app for cyclists to plan safe routes in the city, report hazards and provide feedback on cycling infrastructure. — By LEW GUAN XI