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Keep it moving - or risk a fine

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Stop at Penang Bridge only in emergencies, not for monopole pics, drivers warned

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Photos by KT GOH

GEORGE TOWN: The latest architectural wonder along the Penang Bridge may be irresistible to shutterbugs and Instagrammers. But if you decide to stop and take a photo, you risk getting a compound for a serious traffic offence.

The warning came from Penang police chief Comm Datuk Hamzah Ahmad, who urged drivers not to pull over to admire or take pictures and videos of the stunningly lit betel-nut-inspired Tenaga Nasional Berhad (TNB) monopole towers running parallel to the bridge.

You can only stop on the bridge in an emergency, said Comm Hamzah, adding that action will be taken against those who halt their movement just to enjoy the view.

“Enjoy the beautiful monopoles, but do not stop. Remember that only your passengers can use mobile phones and cameras to record the scenery,” he warned.

Comm Hamzah said those found violating this law could face action under Section 79(2) of the Road Transport Act 1987 for not conforming to traffic directions and signs.

Those convicted under the section can be fined a minimum of



Splash of colour: TNB's monopole transmission towers being lit up in multiple hues in celebration of the 2025 New Year. — KT GOH/The Star

RM300 to a maximum of RM2,000 for those who opt to go to court.

Out of the 31 towers, six located in the middle of the sea are shaped like betel nuts and lit with LED bulbs that have a colour palette of 200 hues.

The colour scheme changes after a couple of minutes. On special evenings like National Day and New Year's Day, the colours are changed to match the mood.

You will see the lights along the bridge as you drive by between 8pm and 4am daily.

Penangite R. Siva, 40, said his family has been asking him to take them to see the monopoles.

“My wife and kids love it and want to take photos and videos when we pass through the bridge.

“But of course, I must keep my eyes on the road, so I haven't gotten a good look at them yet,” said Siva, who commutes along Penang Bridge almost daily.

Another Penangite, Omar Makmor, 59, said he was in awe of the towers' design, adding that the installation of colourful LED lights has made it even better.

“As a Penangite, I am quite proud to see the towers,” he said.

Penang infrastructure and transport committee chairman Zairil Khir Johari said the batter-

ies of the monopoles are charged with solar energy that will then power the night lights, provide a sustainable and visually stunning illumination.

“It is the latest landmark of the state that creates a beautiful scenery at the bridge and serves as a welcome gateway for people visiting Penang,” he said.

Zairil said the towers have been operational since Dec 23 and the powering-up of the LED lights was witnessed by Penang Governor Tun Ahmad Fuzi Abdul Razak on New Year's Eve.

He added that an official launching of the monopole tow-

ers is being planned.

“I have been informed it will likely happen within the next two months,” Zairil said.

Besides providing that extra sparkle to the bridge, the transmission towers, costing RM500mil, serve a critical role as a catalyst for Penang's development as they are capable of supplying 2,000 megawatts (MW) of electricity to the island side of the state.

The existing capacity on the island is 1,130MW.

The Light waterfront area on the island, near the Batu Uban army camp, will house the substation, which will receive the 275,000kV overhead line transmission from the Perai power station main inlet.

The 8.5km monopole transmission towers (26 at sea and five on land) are the second of their kind after the one in Melaka, which connects Pantai Siring to Pulau Besar, a distance of 4.2km.

By implementing an overhead line project, the new monopoles would provide a higher capacity compared to under-bridge cables or submarine cables.

Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow inaugurated the TNB project in September 2022.

Penang Bridge, which opened in 1985, is the first road link between the mainland and the island.