

Simply no excuse for stray livestock on our roads

LET'S be blunt: there can be no excuse for livestock or other domesticated animals to be on the nation's public roads, posing a risk to the lives of motorists.

It is ludicrous to consider how goats, cows and water buffalos can be allowed to wander on the highways and cause serious accidents. This amounts to a pathetic anachronism, a throwback to the times of an underdeveloped Malaya.

Gone are the days of bullock carts and cow dung on the roads — or so we may think. Stray livestock these days are actually worse since they



are left unattended by herders amid far heavier traffic.

In the 21st century, as we head towards fully developed status in 2020, we seem to be moving backwards. Picture our nation's sweeping highways and glittering skyline, dotted by hazardous stray animals on ground level causing mayhem on the tarmac.

Deer crossings in North America

or stray marsupials in Australasia are different, as are monkeys, tapirs or wild boars here, since these are not domesticated animals and should be dealt with separately.

Local councils and other related authorities certainly have to minimise the presence of such animals on the roads. Domesticated animals like livestock, however, are bred by farmers who must ensure that they do not stray.

It is unacceptable to say that some of these farmers do not have the resources to tend to their animals properly. If it is merely a matter of economics, then

they should change jobs.

As it happens, their irresponsible apathy and criminal neglect have caused far too many injuries and deaths on the roads when even a single accident is one too many. Putting up road signs and "urging" herders to be more conscientious are of little or no help on our unlit highways.

The question is whether the authorities have it in them to do what is necessary: clamp down hard and effectively on wandering strays and their owners. Instead of a fine, they should seriously consider man-

datory jail sentences for herders and confiscation of the entire herd for auction or slaughter.

That will work better in removing the herd and the herders, while acting as a deterrent to other wayward farmers. The choice is clear on whether we are serious about national development and being seen to be so.



For more stories:
See Nation Page 14