

THE STRAITS TIMES

Over 50 groups sign 2nd statement urging Govt to ban ferrying workers in lorries



The statement called on the Government to immediately ban the transportation of migrant workers in lorries. ST PHOTO: ARIFFIN JAMAR



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SINGAPORE - A second statement calling for greater safety standards in transporting migrant workers was issued on Wednesday morning, two days after a different statement was put up by another group of signatories.

The letter, titled End Lorry Rides, Save Workers Lives – Ban Them Immediately, was issued on behalf of 53 co-signatories comprising community organisations and civic groups such as human rights group Maruah and workers’ rights group Workers Make Possible.

This comes after another 47 groups and individuals co-signed the different statement asking the Government for a timeline to ban the ferrying of workers in lorries.

The latest statement calls on the Government to immediately ban the ferrying of migrant workers in lorries and for the Ministry of Transport to set up an initiative to support companies that may face challenges in transitioning to safer forms of rides.

It was sent to Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, Acting Transport Minister Chee Hong Tat, Senior Minister of State for Transport Amy Khor and 18 other ministers on Wednesday.

“The simple fact remains that goods lorries were never designed for human transport – they are not safety-tested for human transport, and they violate the dignity of workers,” said the signatories in the statement on Wednesday.

They added that inaction over this issue is “inexcusable”, “given the wide range of alternatives that so many other countries rely on to transport workers in similar industries, including high-tech bus scheduling and shuttle services that allow companies to share buses, minibuses, goods and passenger vehicles and more”.



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The push for safer rides for workers comes after 37 people – including migrant workers – were injured in two accidents involving lorries on July 18 and 19.

According to the Ministry of Transport’s statistics in 2021, 58 people died and 4,765 people were injured between the years 2011 and 2020 after they were involved in traffic accidents while travelling in lorries.

Earlier in July, Mr Louis Ng, an MP for Nee Soon GRC, renewed a call in Parliament for the ban, suggesting that the authorities plot a road map to achieve this and implement other safety measures in the interim – such as piloting the use of buses to transport workers for larger

construction companies and implementing staggered work hours, which the Government can help coordinate and provide some funding for.

He said on Monday that he will be filing two questions on this issue during the parliamentary sitting next week, including asking about the rationale for an exception under the Road Traffic Act that allows workers to be transported in lorries.

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