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# Experts: Keep young away from superbikes

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PETALING JAYA, Jan 24 — The Road Transport Department says it is time to review the law which allows 16-year-olds to apply for licences to operate high-powered motorcycles.

Its director-general, Datuk Seri Nadzri Siron, says the department's hands are tied as Article 39 of the Road Transport Act stipulates the minimum age to apply for a "B" full licence — which allows the holder to ride a motorcycle with a capacity of 250 cubic cm (cc) and above — is 16.

Nevertheless, the easy access to such machines is worrying.

Two Fourth Formers from SMK Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah died on Jan 14 after riding a friend's BMW S1000RR in Shah Alam. Muhammad Asyraf Mohd Naizie and Muhammad Fudail Mazlin, both 16 and clad in T-shirts and jeans, were riding in the fast lane before losing control and hitting the divider. They were thrown off the bike and died at the scene.

"The rider of the bike did not have valid licence to ride a superbike," said Nadzri.

"While that was a case of two youngsters using a motorcycle belonging to another, generally we have no say over 16-year-olds applying for licences to ride such motorcycles as it is allowed under the law."

However, Nadzri said, it did not mean teenagers could obtain the licences easily.

"There are many practical classes and seminars the learners must go through before getting their licences," he said.

Driving school instructors admit the training modules for those intending to ride superbikes were inadequate.

These bikes are also easily available at cheaper prices through grey importers. Some traders offer full loans of up to 20 years for civil servants.

Nadzri took a swipe at parents who bought such machines for their children and those who allowed youngsters to ride the powerful machines.

"Handling big bikes is no easy feat. It takes time to master. That is why we have various classifications for motorcycles," he said.

He was in favour of calls to review the law to only allow motorcyclists above a certain age to be given licences for high-powered motorcycles.



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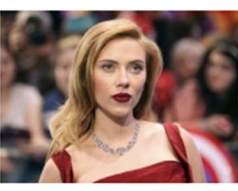
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 "If the lawmakers amend the law, we welcome it," he said.

He also welcomed suggestions by road safety experts, particularly the Malaysian Institute of Road Safety Research (Miros), on reviewing the age limit for those intending to ride big motorcycles.

Miros director-general Prof Wong Shaw Voon said it was worth considering to require learners to obtain the "B2" licence first, and the "B" licence only after two years of probation.

"Teenagers are not physically and mentally fit to ride such bikes. It is good for road safety to push for a more mature age," he said.

 Wong said a collision involving a motorcycle with higher mass, power and speed could result in serious injury or even death.

 "It is not only the power and speed but also how you ride it," he said.



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