

# Not disabled-friendly enough

Amenities for the visually impaired and wheelchair users at bus, ferry and railway terminals in Penang are still inadequate, according to a study by a group of UiTM students. >3



**Dangers lurking:** A visually impaired participant in the study by UiTM's Puncak Alam campus in Shah Alam, showing that blind pedestrians could end up in the wrong lane without tactile paving at the ferry terminal in Penang. (Inset) Another blind participant finding it hard to cross the busy Weld Quay stretch without a tactile walkway. — GARY CHEN/The Star



Sloped platforms make it possible for wheelchair users to cross bus lanes but the hand railings on this tactile pavement are an obstruction to the blind.

# Poor facilities for the disabled

## Study: Infrastructure at terminals pose danger and confusion

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FACILITIES for visually impaired and wheelchair-bound passengers at bus, ferry and railway terminals in Penang could be improved, revealed a study by a group of Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) students.

The 24 transport studies final-year students from UiTM's Puncak Alam campus in Shah Alam found these places posed challenges to the disabled, especially visually impaired passengers.

Assoc Prof Sabariah Mohamad, who is the lecturer-in-charge of the study, said the facilities at the terminals were insufficient for disabled passengers while some infrastructure caused confusion and danger.

"Tactile walkways and guide rails for the visually impaired are inadequate.

"We also found that the steps and ramps at the ferry terminals are too steep," she said after the recent one-day study conducted at the Butterworth train station,

Korntar bus interchange, taxi stands in George Town and the ferry and bus terminals at Weld Quay and Butterworth.

Sabariah said barriers placed by shops along the walkway at the Weld Quay ferry terminal posed a danger to this group of passengers.

She said the study was held in collaboration with the Land Public Transport Commission (SPAD) and supported by Persatuan Tongkat Putih Pulau Pinang (Penang White Cane Association).

"The association brought along eight visually impaired and wheelchair-bound persons to assist in the study," she added.

Sabariah said the study was conducted to check the effectiveness of facilities at the bus and railway terminals, and whether public transport services met the travel needs of the disabled passengers.

She said the students would prepare and submit a report to SPAD and the local authorities with proposed recommendations of facilities to be upgraded for the disabled.



Sabariah interviewing Persatuan Tongkat Putih Pulau Pinang chairman Swarn Singh on the effectiveness of infrastructure for the disabled at bus and railway terminals.