Teaching errant motorists a lesson

China cracks down on road users who abuse emergency lanes and block rescue attempts for accident victims.

Sea of humanity: Security personnel keeping watch on pedestrian traffic during the Golden Week holidays at a zebra crossing in Shanghai. — AFP

Chuan Metropolitan Daily reported the ambulance was blocked for some 5km by vehicles occupying the emergency lane in a traffic jam. It took the rescue team 20 minutes to reach the child, with the help of traffic policeman Xu Yong. Xu later let off his anger on WeChat, saying he would not tolerate such behaviour and swearing that he would not let such drivers go if they come across them in future.

His statement was supported by many netizens, with some calling on the government to raise the punishment for these motorists. Some suggested that the fine be increased to 3,000 yuan (RM1,927) and the deduction of 12 demerit points, or even revocation of their driving licences.

The daily also learned from the provincial police department that some 900 vehicles were found abusing the emergency lanes in the province on the first two days of the long holiday rush, which began on Oct 1. Last Sunday marked the beginning of the "Golden Week" holiday in China when the country swung into the festive spirit on the 69th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China and the Mid-Autumn Festival.

Like the Spring Festival (Chinese New Year), the Chinese get a golden one-week holiday for National Day celebration too. The official holidays for these two occasions are only three working days each, but they will be stretched to a week, and the extra days will be replaced on the weekends.

This year, the Chinese National Day falls on Oct 1 and Mid-Autumn Festival on Oct 4. So they worked on Sept 30 (Saturday) to make up for the extra day off on Oct 6, to enjoy the long break from Oct 1 to Oct 8. The next time the two holidays meet will be in year 2020.

Golden Week holiday has always been a popular period to travel. Every year, tourism in Malaysia, the authorities and those in the hospitality industry have been making efforts to grab the opportunity to cash in on the Chinese travellers. It is estimated that some six million Chinese spent this holiday overseas.

Besides international trips, domestic tourism is also booming. The national railway system set a new record with more than 15 million trips made on Oct 1 itself, and over 10 million trips on the following few days.

At press time, China raked in more than 90 billion yuan (RM57.9bil) daily on domestic tourism revenue, according to a statement released by China National Tourism Administration.

As expected, railway stations in Beishangguang (Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou) were the busiest of all. Rural tourism and destinations rich in folk customs and traditions were among the popular choices this year.

China expected to see 600 million visitors at major tourist destinations and rake in an estimated 500 billion yuan (RM320.3bil) during this holiday period.

Traffic congestion was reported on highways and major roads in the cities.

China Daily reported nearly 1,000 passengers missed their planes due to a traffic jam on the airport expressway at Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport of southern Guangdong province.