

We need to boost rail service use, says Liow

PUTRAJAYA: The under-utilisation of rail services in the country is a loss on the Government's coffers, says Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai.

The Transport Minister said presently only 40% of rail lines managed by Railway Assets Corporation (RAC) were utilised.

"The ministry encourages the involvement of multiple railway operators, so that we can maximise what we can get from our lines," he told reporters after attending RAC's silver jubilee celebrations here yesterday.

Keretapi Tanah Melayu Bhd (KTMB) is the sole operator using RAC's assets and train infrastructures, including its railway.

Liow said the government did not see this situation as beneficial.

"We spend a lot to ensure we have a rail network that is safe and efficient, but its usage is not at an optimum level," he added.

He urged RAC, KTMB and the Land Public Transport Commission (SPAD) to work together on a comprehensive strategy that could help increase railway usage.

Liow said several freight operators had applied to SPAD for a licence to operate their services, adding that the processing should be sped up.

Besides railways, RAC also manages train stations and related facilities such as the station's car parks.

In a speech he gave earlier, Liow expressed the hope that Malaysia's rail service would help spur economic growth.

"This is in line with the ministry's focus to enhance usage of our railways to an optimum level to reduce traffic jams and expand the logistics industry," he said.

Also present was ministry secretary-general Datuk Seri Saripuddin Kasim and RAC general manager Dr Kang Tong Hum.