

More trains and buses for Raya

KUALA LUMPUR: The Transport Ministry hopes to add more trains and express buses to serve the balik kampung crowds during the coming festive season.

Minister Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai said he had already directed KTM Berhad to increase its services for the period. "Most of the demand is from Kuala Lumpur to the northern states. So, they will be providing 27 trips daily to the northern states, some up to Padang Besar.

"There is a limit to how much we can increase for the time being, however, because we do not have enough train coaches," he told reporters after launching the Hari Raya integrated operations and road safety campaign here yesterday.

The ministry, said Liow, was also working with express bus operators to try and increase the number of buses during the Hari Raya period. However, he said there was a lack of bus drivers due to more stringent selection criteria. "(For some routes) we will need two drivers to take turns because of the long distance. "These are among the shortcomings we have during the Raya season but we will work towards overcoming them," he said.

On the road accident statistics for last year, Liow said the numbers had increased, especially for fatalities. "Last year, we had 521,466 road accidents compared to 489,606 previously.

"The number of fatalities from road accidents showed a sudden increase – going up to 7,152 deaths last year compared to 6,706 in 2015." "During the two-week road safety campaign last year, police recorded 20,982 accidents, with 299 deaths," he said.

As over 60% of the fatalities involved motorcyclists, Liow said this year's campaign would focus on raising awareness among this group of road users. "None of these statistics mean that the previous campaign have failed. If you look at the ratio of accidents to registered vehicles, that has actually gone down.

"We went from four deaths for every 10,000 vehicles in 2010 to 2.59 deaths for every 10,000 vehicles last year. "In developed countries, the ratio is two deaths for every 10,000 vehicles and we aim to reach this by 2020," he said.

This year's road safety campaign, with the theme "Panduan Cermat Sampai Selamat" will run for two weeks and includes advocacy as well as enforcement of road safety rules and regulations.