BENTONG: Besides screening e-hailing drivers, upcoming changes to existing transport laws are targeted at providing a level playing field for taxis and e-hailing services, said Transport Minister Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai.

He said the ministry has been working closely with the Land Public Transport Commission (SPAD) on amendments to the Land Transport Act 2010 and the Commercial Vehicles Licensing Board Act 1987.

“We want to provide an equal platform for taxi drivers and all e-hailing operators,” he said at a Hari Raya event at Dewan Homestay Kampung Shafie here yesterday.

Liow said they hope the amendments, which will allow authorities such as the police and the Road Transport Department to screen Uber and Grab drivers, will be tabled and passed in Parliament this month.

The move is to ensure that e-hailing drivers have no previous criminal records, said Liow, when asked what measures have been taken to vet the growing number of these drivers nationwide.

Currently e-hailing operators screened their own drivers but SPAD will be able to ask Uber and Grab for the database of their drivers under the proposed amendments.

Liow, who is also Bentong MP, said the Government is also looking at making it a requirement for e-hailing operators to install an emergency or panic button to ensure the safety of passengers.

“These efforts are all ongoing. We will continue to help monitor drivers’ behaviour,” he said. At the event, Liow also urged all Malaysians to stay united and preserve racial harmony.

“All of us celebrate Hari Raya in peace with full festivities unlike other countries,” he said. He also distributed RM30,000 allocated for various developments in Kampung Shafie besides financial assistance to the needy. At a separate event in Simpang Pelangai, Liow announced RM90,000 in allocations have been approved to upgrade a hall and another RM10,000 to build a covered car park for the surrounding area.

He also said he has discussed with the state government on the setting up of another Rural Transformation Centre here to ensure the people will be able to get the best services from different government agencies.