

Public transport still unpopular

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Tuesday, 06 October 2009 13:17 - Last Updated Tuesday, 06 October 2009 14:05

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KUALA LUMPUR: The Transport Minister wants more Klang Valley folk to use public transport but recognises that services first need to be improved. Datuk Seri Ong Tee Keat said he was willing to hear the concerns of consumers as well as players in the public transportation sector.

Currently, only 16% of the Klang Valley's population uses public transport and the Government would like to increase this figure to 25%. Ong said that among the main complaints were irregular service in certain areas, lack of service during non-peak hours, vehicle breakdown and poor maintenance of bus terminals and bus stops.

He added that he would also look at having unpopular residential roads being properly serviced by public transport.

Ong, the Urban Public Transport panel head, said it was on his agenda to meet with not only public bus operators but also representatives of other modes of public transport such as the Light Rail Transit and KTM Komuter.

On bus companies complaining of unfair pricing compared to fares set by the Government for RapidKL buses, Ong said he would gather feedback.

◆We are here not just to promote only one company's interest but also to look into national concerns.

◆If we want to allow competition, then it should be on a level playing field but not at the expense of the public, ◆ he said during a fact-finding walkabout at the Taman Maluri bus station in Cheras yesterday.

Ong also pointed out that his ministry was not the only one with the power and jurisdiction over public transport.

The Transport Ministry is not the licensing agency for bus services nor is it responsible for the recent fare hike.

On whether the ministry might provide subsidies to encourage the use of public transport, he said: ◆Let us not be obsessed with the subsidy psyche ◆ the main thing now is improving the areas of concern. ◆

He said the ministry was also looking into the possibility of introducing inter-company passes but it was not easy to convince all the companies.

Source: http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2009/10/6/nation/4845283&sec=nation