

V-C to head bus crash probe

KUALA LUMPUR: The independent board of inquiry set up to probe into the Simpang Pulai-Cameron Highlands bus crash will be chaired by Universiti Putra Malaysia vice-chancellor Datuk Radin Umar Radin Sohadi.

Transport Minister Datuk Seri Kong Cho Ha said Radin was chosen as he holds a PhD in traffic safety engineering, as well as an engineering degree in transport and traffic engineering.

Kong said the other appointees included officers from the Malaysian Institute of Transport, the Institute of Engineering, the Road Engineering Association of Malaysia, the Federation of Malaysian Consumers Associations and mechanical engineering expert and consultant Datuk Foong Choy Chye.

The board will call and record statements from witnesses and experts on the accident, which killed 25 Thai tourists and two Malaysians on Dec 20 last year.

The board will submit to the government its findings on breaches of the law, the overall

structure of the commercial vehicle and public transport operations, as well as any recommendations for improvement in response to weaknesses identified during the investigation.

Meanwhile, the Road Transport Department has launched multiple operations to clamp down on errant drivers of commercial transport vehicles.

Its 112 officers have gone undercover since Friday.

Enforcement officers conducted surprise checks on 415 tour buses between Dec 31 and Jan 10. They took action against 94 buses for 176 offences, including failure to obtain insurance and driving with expired road tax.

RTD is also conducting surprise inspections on 972 express buses at major bus terminals daily.

The department will take action against buses which had failed inspections three times in a row. Last year, 4,381 buses failed three inspections in a row compared with 4,362 in 2009.