

# Experts: Less traffic, more productivity with WFA policy

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**PETALING JAYA:** Despite its benefits, the work-from-anywhere (WFA) policy, introduced by Indonesia to stagger travel time and ease traffic congestion during festive seasons, may not be suited for all professions, says a Malaysian employers' group.

If the private sector plans to implement the WFA policy, it should conduct a feasibility trial prior to major festive holidays, said Malaysian Employers Federation president Datuk Dr Syed Hussain Syed Husman.

"Prior to adopting the policy, challenges and employer concerns should be ironed out as not all employees may be eligible or suited for the WFA policy.

"Remote work may be possible for some jobs but there are numerous professions and tasks that require the physical presence of employees such as healthcare and emergency services," he said when asked to comment on the WFA arrangement.

Syed Hussain pointed out that poor Internet connectivity in some rural areas may also hinder work efficiency, and data security accessed away from office net-



## Perk of the job:

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works is also a major concern, especially when it involves sensitive content.

"It may lead to some employees extending their holidays unofficially, blurring the boundaries between work and leave. Teamwork may suffer too if employees are away for extended periods," he added.

However, generally, experts including those on road safety said the WFA policy does offer compelling reasons for Malaysia to follow suit.

They believe that with major roads and highways all clogged as Malaysians make their traditional trip home for the various festivals throughout the year, the WFA

may prove to be an effective solution in resolving the woes of exasperated motorists.

Syed Hussain said that apart from easing congestion on highways, the WFA policy also enables employees to spend more time with families without having to forgo work commitments.

"Fewer last-minute balik kampung travels would mean less strain on infrastructure and potentially improve productivity as employees avoid traffic congestion that can be tiresome.

"Reducing stress levels from heavy traffic may also lead to better post-holiday productivity of employees.

"If planned appropriately, this

remote work policy in conjunction with major festive seasons can ensure that the operations of a company run seamlessly even when a number of employees are not at their workplace," he said.

Road safety expert Assoc Prof Dr Law Teik Hua of Universiti Putra Malaysia said the country can adapt the successful Indonesian policy by introducing a targeted WFA framework.

"Malaysia could achieve multiple benefits such as reducing the notorious traffic congestion along the North-South Expressway, stimulating rural economies, and significantly cutting government transportation subsidies by up to 50% for expressway travellers."

He said the policy's core advantage lies in its ability to stagger travel demand as demonstrated by Indonesia's 37% increase in early departures.

Law said while providing flexibility to employees, the policy should distinguish those eligible for it and exclude personnel in frontline services such as healthcare, enforcement and other emergency response agencies to ensure essential services are not disrupted.

"This innovative approach positions Malaysia to lead in smart

mobility solutions while respecting cultural traditions and fiscal responsibility.

"The potential 50% reduction in transportation subsidies alone makes this a compelling proposition for policymakers seeking efficient solutions to perennial congestion problems."

Law proposed a phased pilot programme with 10,000 civil servants this year as a test of the WFA and its efficiency.

Malaysian Road and Transportation Safety Association adviser and former president Nik Mohd Salim Nik Mohd Salleh said the WFA policy will not only benefit road users during festive seasons but also those who commute to work every day.

"In this era of digital technology, any form of communication with employees or matters related to their work can be done online.

"It's about time the government considered this as part of a strategy to help to reduce travel fatigue due to traffic congestion which could contribute to accidents," he said.

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