

# Improve road conditions and visibility, say experts

**PETALING JAYA:** Improvements in road conditions and better visibility can help prevent accidents, say road safety experts.

Universiti Putra Malaysia's Road Safety Research Centre head Assoc Prof Dr Law Teik Hua said that while the nation has made progress in road construction, there is room for improvement.

"In cities, there are well-maintained highways and expressways.

"But the East-West Highway along stretches near Gerik and Jeli, and other rural and mountainous roads are still dangerous because they are old, poorly lit, and not well-maintained.

"Some were built more than half a century ago with minimal maintenance," he said when contacted yesterday.

He added that conditions on secondary roads, particularly those with abrupt turns, steep slopes and crossings for animals, should be fixed immediately.

"Potholes, uneven surfaces and road edges that are getting worse can cause accidents, especially on twisty roads.

"It is important to do regular inspections and repairs," he said,



**Left behind:** Perak police chief Datuk Noor Hisam Nordin (right) looking at the belongings of students involved in the Gerik bus crash. — RONNIE CHIN/The Star

adding that good illumination is important for drivers to see better at night.

Law added that Malaysia's road safety plan needs to go from reactive to proactive, to prevent acci-

dents in the first place.

"Street lights are necessary but better road design, smarter enforcement, and higher car safety standards would make the roads safer for everyone, espe-

cially on high-risk routes like the East-West Highway.

"The latest tragedy calls for prompt action, not simply short-term remedies," he said.

Recognising that yesterday's accident that killed 15 Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI) students involved a chartered bus, Malaysian Institute of Road Safety Research (Miros) chairman Prof Dr Wong Shaw Voon said safety must be paramount, no matter the transport used.

"Safety must always be the priority when chartering or procuring transportation services. This is sometimes overlooked by those seeking to charter a bus," he said.

Prof Wong said drivers face a bigger challenge if roads are located along poorly-lit hilly terrain or if they are winding routes.

"It is impossible to light up every inch of the road. As such, retroreflective materials such as cat's eyes [road studs] should be installed along stretches which cannot be lit up.

"This includes using retroreflective material for the guard rails and even the markings on the roads," he said.