

# 'Fuel issue a golden opportunity to promote public transport'

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**PETALING JAYA:** The ongoing uncertainty over fuel supply and price surges presents a golden opportunity to resolve Malaysia's traffic congestion issues by improving public transit services and public adoption, say transportation experts.

Transport expert Assoc Prof Dr Law Teik Hua from Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) said improving public transit services would be the best long-term solution to both the ongoing crisis and to improve Malaysia's sustainability.

"With so many people now worried about the price of fuel, there is no better time to encourage them to make the switch to public transport.

"Improving our public transport systems would provide long-term structural effects on our cities, reducing the long-standing heavy traffic congestion on our roads.

"This will also have a positive impact on the environment while increasing economic productivity as people spend less time driving in traffic," said Prof Law, who heads UPM's Road Safety Research Centre.

He said this would be a better solution compared to the proposal to implement temporary flexible work arrangements for the public and private sectors.

"Blanket flexible work arrangements, like work from home policy, may not be effective in all types of industries, which could negatively affect productivity.

"It could also negatively affect sectors reliant on office workers' footfall, such as

food and beverage, and retail businesses in the cities where those businesses are located," he added.

He said improving public transit services' reliability and frequency should take priority so commuters would not have to plan their day around the transport service schedule.

"This will make the service more likely to become a more popular choice for many as well as greatly increase overall commuter confidence and consensus," he added.

Malaysian Land Public Transport Fans chairman Zac Cheong said improving public transit services would help fix the fundamental issue that ties people to their private vehicles.

"We should be building a system people want to use, not forcing them to stay home," he said, adding that the focus should be on resolving the long-standing last-mile connectivity of public transit services first, if it is to become a compelling first-choice option for Malaysians.

"A train is only as good as the journey to and from the station, since the reason most people avoid public transport in the first place is that it is inconvenient to get to work or home after arriving at a station.

"Improvements to public transit must be complemented by expanding safe pedestrian walkways, dedicated bicycle lanes and feeder bus networks.

"Services like BAS.My and Rapid On-Demand should also be expanded to ensure they are frequent, reliable and truly integrated with rail hubs to solve the first and last-mile gap," he said.