

Check your vehicle before balik kampung trip

By **CHARLES RAMENDRAN**
charles.ramen@thestar.com.my

PETALING JAYA: As tens of thousands of motorists prepare to hit the highways for Hari Raya Aidilfitri, the familiar rush comes with more than just traffic jams.

Behind the wheel, a failing tyre or faulty brakes can quickly lead to tragedy.

However, a few simple steps can ensure the trip ends in joy, rather than heartbreak.

Automotive influencer Bro Wong, emphasised focusing on a vehicle's cooling system, urging motorists to ensure the coolant level of a radiator is correct, while radiator hoses and the cooling fan should be in good condition.

He said if the air-conditioning is only cold while the car is moving, it could signal a cooling system or fan issue.

Wong said the fluid levels for engine, brakes, hydraulics, power steering and the gearbox must also be inspected.

"Make sure the engine oil is at the correct level and not overdue for service, while the transmission oil should be in favourable condition," he said, adding that drivers should also look out for any leaks, including from the braking system.

Tyres must have sufficient tread, at the recommended air pressure, with no visible damage, while brakes should be responsive with no unusual sounds when applied.


"If there are signs of overheating, burning smells, smoke or unusual behaviour, stop immediately and inspect the vehicle. In the same vein, motorists should also monitor the temperature gauge and not ignore dashboard warning lights," he added.

Malaysian Road and Transport Safety Association president Md Hairolzaman Muhamed Nor said drivers should ensure they get adequate rest, especially if they

Vehicle safety checklist

Stay alert at all times when driving, monitor engine temperature and act promptly to signs of technical failure before it becomes worse. Pull over at a safe location and be wary of passing traffic.

- Cooling system**
Ensure radiator, reservoir filled with adequate water. Radiator hoses and cooling fan are in good condition. Check for leakages, damage to related parts and overheating.
- Wipers**
Ensure windscreen wipers effectively keep front and rear view clear. Replace aged wipers with hardened rubber linings.
- Lubrication system**
Ensure engine, brake, hydraulic, steering, transmission fluids are within recommended levels.
- Battery**
Ensure battery is in good working condition with adequate voltage.
- Lights**
Ensure headlights, tail lights and brake lights are working in good order.
- Brakes**
Ensure the braking system is in good working condition and there are no unusual sounds or weak braking when applied.
- Tyres**
Ensure tyres have adequate tread, recommended air pressure and no visible cracks or damage.



*TheStar*graphics

are fasting.

"As they would be fasting, they are more likely to feel tired and exhausted," he said, adding that journey planning can help in fatigue management.

"Drivers should take breaks at least every two hours before resuming their journey. They should not remain seated in the car during these breaks and should rest for at least 15 minutes outside their vehicle. Sitting for four to five hours continuously can increase the risk of falling asleep at the wheel," he said.

Universiti Putra Malaysia road safety

expert Assoc Prof Law Teik Hua said while vehicle condition is important, motorists should not overlook critical non-technical aspects, particularly vehicle fires.

"Modern cars have complex electrical systems and, in some cases, high-density batteries which can ignite in an accident. A leaking fuel line or faulty engine may also catch fire," he said, adding that although such incidents are infrequent, the consequences can be severe.

Law said that if smoke or fire is detected, drivers and occupants should exit quickly and not try to retrieve their belongings.