

Expert: Cashless system will boost Intelligent Transport System

KUALA LUMPUR: Experts believe that the Transport Ministry's call to adopt cashless transactions in public transportation is a golden opportunity to revisit the Intelligent Transport System (ITS) model.

ITS, introduced in the mid-1990s, refers to the application of information and communication technologies (ICT) for road transportation to support and boost applications.

The applications include electronic payment status and traffic management, traveller's information, traffic control and surveillance system as well as commercial vehicle monitoring systems.

Universiti Sains Malaysia senior lecturer in transportation engineering, Dr Nur Sabahiah Abdul Sukor said implementing a cashless system would boost ITS.

"ITS in Malaysia is stagnant as we rely on Touch 'n Go and Smart Tag as a mode of payment for transportation.

"While we do not have sufficient technology, there are many companies who are willing to contribute ideas and their technology to boost transportation infrastructure."

Nur Sabahiah said people were aware of the cashless system, but said operators should organise more awareness campaigns on the payment mode.

For example, Japan introduced a cashless system through an integrated smart card that can be used on expressways, public transportation (buses and trains) as well as to pay for groceries.

This, she said, was because of the trust Japanese people had in technology.

On improving the system, she said the cashless system's introduction must be done in tandem with the advancement of the transportation.

Universiti Putra Malaysia Road Safety Research Centre head Associate Professor Law Teik Hua said Malaysia could emulate other nations' cashless system if it had a developed ITS applica-

tion in place. He said for this to take place, the nation's big data system needed to be implemented for the public transport service.

"People are not able to answer why we need Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) when it was introduced.

"It was the same situation when the Smart Tag was introduced.

"It took a long time for people to fully use it.

"The benefits were not clear and that was why people were reluctant as they were paying out of their pocket."

For the government to promote the cashless system, public transportation service providers must

come out with a flexible system to benefit commuters.

"The e-wallet has a rebate system in certain highways, but it must benefit the public, such as RFID.

"However, it has many flaws, such as how it was installed and it cannot be transferred when you buy a new car."

Malaysian Public Transport Users Association president Ajit Johl said the cashless model's must be explained to the public.

"The government should make the business model clear, if it is costing Prasarana (to pay vendors providing the cashless application), then it will cost the public.