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Move to reduce road deaths by 30pc by year 2000

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - The Government is confident that the number of deaths caused by road accidents will be reduced by 30 per cent by 2000 if all motorists, especially motorcyclists and pillion riders, adhere to all traffic rules.

Most road safety campaigns so far were targeted at motorcyclists and pillion riders because they made up 60 per cent of the total number of accidents.

Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik said this today, adding that compliance with the law would reduce accidents even though the number of vehicles on the road would increase.

The number of vehicles in Malaysia were on the rise unlike Japan, which Dr Ling said for example, had the same population of people and vehicles as it did 10 years ago.

"Malaysia's population 10 years ago was 10 million, now it is 20 million and the number of vehicles then was four million and now it is eight million," he told reporters after witnessing the launch of the Road Safety Campaign for Motorcyclists 1997 to 1999 by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at Dataran Merdeka here.

Dr Ling said it was important for motorcyclists and pillion riders to wear their helmets properly to avoid head injury during accidents.

Dr Mahathir said graphic advertisements shown during the launch made it very clear why the helmet was important.

The Road Transport Department and all other related officers would enforce the proper use of helmets strictly as this was for the safety of the users.

On the compulsory use of reflector vests, Dr Ling said the Government would not make it mandatory but encouraged motorcyclists to use it.

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