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Mahathir-Accidents

PRIME MINISTER LAMENTS ILL-ATTITUDE OF ROAD USERS

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 9 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today expressed disappointment over the attitude of some road-users who failed to abide by traffic rules despite serious efforts by the authorities to reduce road accidents and deaths.

The Prime Minister said the government could do nothing more if road-users, especially motorcyclists, refuse to observe traffic rules.

"We don't know what else to do. We ask the people not to rush when driving... what's wrong with being 15 minutes late. (But) they are in such a hurry, especially the motorcyclists," he told reporters at his Hari Raya open house at Sri Perdana here.

He was commenting on the rising number of road deaths, particularly during the current Chinese New Year and Hari Raya holidays

The road death toll on Friday -- Chinese New Year day -- was 22, three more than that for the previous day although the number of road accidents declined from 645 on Thursday to 560 on Friday.

The 22 deaths, of which 17 were motorcyclists and two pillion riders, were the highest in a single day since police launched "Operasi Pacak II," a special operation to curb fatal accidents, on Jan 31.

Dr Mahathir said he had seen while driving himself how some motorcyclists overtook his car in a dangerous manner.

He said the motorcyclists were dicing with death but "I don't know what else to do because we have advised... there're police, radar and everything else has been done.

"I don't know (what else to do) other than to stop using the roads altogether," he added.

Asked whether he thought the special lanes provided for buses and taxis along certain roads in the city since Feb 1 would be effective in reducing traffic congestion, Dr Mahathir said that had yet to be determined because soon after its introduction, the people had gone back to their hometowns for the double festival holidays.

"So, I think, we have to see first. But, this is only one measure... if people don't comply and use the bus lanes too, it will be difficult," he added.

He said the bus lanes were meant to speed up service for commuters and encourage more people to commute to the city instead of driving to work. --

Motorists could help reduce traffic congestion by using the public transport system, like buses, light rail transit, commuter train and other services.

"We have done everything for the people's convenience but the people themselves don't want the easy way," he added.

On the failure of the car pool campaign, Dr Mahathir said the people were uncooperative but they were quick to criticise the traffic congestion in the city.

He said: "If all comply... four to a car, make way for buses, don't stop in the yellow box at traffic light... if (we) follow the rules, insya-Allah there'll be no problems.

"But, if everyone doesn't follow regulations and we scold others, than it's difficult."

Most of the traffic problems were due to motorists being in a hurry and failing to follow regulations, he added. -- BERNAMA

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