

# PM: Traffic jams affect productivity

## Panel formed to look into congestion issue

By BENJAMIN LEE  
benkh@thestar.com.my

PUTRAJAYA: Traffic jams have become a major inconvenience and affects productivity which results in losses to the country and this issue must be resolved, says Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

Anwar said traffic congestion was costly and caused workers to lose a lot of time just to get to their workplaces.

"Problems of public transportation and traffic congestion will affect productivity (and) the country because of the hours wasted by employees getting to work" he said.

A Cabinet committee has been set up to tackle the perennial traffic congestion issue and other matters related to public transportation.

A study in Bangkok showed billions of dollars were lost in terms of productivity because of traffic congestion, said Anwar at the launch of the Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) Putrajaya Line Phase Two (MRJ2) at the Serdang MRT Depot.

He gave his assurance that for every project, transparency in maintenance would be prioritised without any room for leakages and corruption.

"I am emphasising this because the strategic aspects of public transportation cost a lot of money," he said, adding that the government was committed to the concept of good governance.

Anwar also said the government was focusing its efforts on strengthening critical sectors such as health and education this year.



**All aboard!:** Anwar and MRT Corp CEO Datuk Mohd Zarif Hashim standing on board the new MRT train after the launch of the MRT Putrajaya Line at the Serdang MRT Depot. - AZHAR MAHFOF/The Star

"For this year we want to take very firm and bold measures by spending far more to resolve basic infrastructure problems concerning dilapidated schools, toilets, school facilities, health and medical aspects.

"That is why we see major allocations for the Health Ministry and Education Ministry under Budget 2023. It is not that other ministries are not important, it is just that we need to focus on sectors which have pressing needs," he added.

Meanwhile, commuters using the

newly launched Putrajaya MRT Line can enjoy free rides until March 31.

Anwar, during the launch, said the project was part of the unity government's goal to provide better public transportation in the country.

Transport Minister Anthony Loke told reporters that the Cabinet committee would comprise Cabinet ministers and chaired by Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi.

"The committee will take comprehensive steps to resolve the con-

stant traffic congestion issues plaguing the country among other issues related to public transportation.

"This is part of the government's commitment to enhance and develop the transportation network in the country," he said, adding that the committee's first meeting would be early next month.