

TO BE LAUNCHED TODAY

BOOSTING RAIL CARGO SERVICES TO REDUCE LORRIES ON ROADS

National Transport Policy will optimise service and create safer environment for motorists

NURADZIMMAH DAIM
AND HANA NAZ HARUN
KUALA LUMPUR
news@nst.com.my

THE National Transport Policy will look into measures to boost rail cargo services, the Dewan Rakyat was told yesterday.

Transport Minister Anthony Loke said this was among the key areas in the policy, which was aimed at optimising the services and reducing container lorries on the roads to create a safer environment for motorists.

"In the framework of the National Transportation Policy, which will be launched by the prime minister (Tun Dr Mahathir Mahathir) on Thursday, we en-



Anthony Loke

courage more cargo transportation services to be used because they are safer and more reliable, and they reduce the number of container lorries on our roads.

"We also have to look at how cargo services could be optimised," he said, adding that the 2020 Budget stated that the government would undertake a feasibility study on a rail bypass project between Serendah and Port Klang.

"This alignment would accommodate cargo transportation between the northern areas and

Port Klang without going through a central station in Kuala Lumpur, thus making the service more efficient and attractive to companies," he said in reply to a question by Teh Kok Lim (PH-DAP-Taiping).

Earlier, Loke said there were two cargo services in the country, provided by Keretapi Tanah Melayu Bhd (KTMB), for containerised cargo and bulk cargo.

"They are operating on KTMB's networks to the main ports, like the Klang Port, Penang Port, Pasir Gudang and Padang Besar Containers' Terminal.

"For 2019 (until August), an average of 28 train runs with a cargo load of half a million tonne were transported daily, mostly comprising commodities, land-bridges, cement and sugar.

"The ministry is aware that the rail service is the most economical mode of land transportation based on its capacity to transport heavy materials and commo-

ties in bulk."

Loke said several initiatives were being implemented to improve KTMB's passenger and freight services.

They include the RM10.5 billion electric double-track project between Gemas and Johor Baru, RM8.3 billion rail lines repair and upgrade works for routes, namely Gemas-Tumpat, Klang Valley, Kempas Baru-Pasir Gudang and North Klang Port branch, as well as the RM186.6 million work to boost the rolling stock capacity on locomotives.

To improve its services, KTMB planned to have more competitive fares for its passenger service, boost its efficiency by transporting 40 to 50 cargo cars for each trip in a fixed schedule and introduce a freight online system, said Loke.

He said plans were also afoot to expand cargo services in the east coast through the East Coast Rail Link, expected to be completed in 2027.

