

# KPI for stage bus operators

## Loke: ISBSF transporters to be subjected to stricter standards

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**PUTRAJAYA:** Stage bus operators that are receiving Federal Government subsidies through the Interim Stage Bus Support Fund (ISBSF) to stay afloat will now be subject to tighter standards, says Transport Minister Anthony Loke.

Beyond just merely operating the agreed number of trips, these operators must now observe a key performance indicator that is linked to punctuality, he said here yesterday as he unveiled measures to incentivise operators to provide efficient service to the people who are reliant on public transport, especially in the rural areas.

These residents, who can't afford their own vehicles, are unable to drive, or can't afford the e-hailing/taxi fares, rely a lot on stage buses to get about.

However, running stage coaches in certain areas turned out to be loss-making for some companies, who are tempted to discontinue these services purely from the perspective of the bottom line.

In place since 2012, ISBSF has seen more than RM1bil in federal funding to keep rural stage coach services afloat.

"From 2023 to 2025, the government has allocated RM169.87mil for this purpose. It is a huge sum, but it is necessary for the sake of continuity. But when there is a huge allocation, the government needs to ensure the money is well spent, and is paid only to operators that deliver good and efficient service," he said in his speech at the launch at the ministry here yesterday.

For the new ISBSF contracts that will be signed, the government will insert clauses to ensure



**Getting around:** Operators that score at least 70% in the performance evaluation will be given a three-year contract, says Loke. — KK SHAM/The Star

bus punctuality, which is a perennial bugbear for users, who often do not have an idea when the next bus will arrive.

"Now, operators need to achieve adherence to their schedule at least 80% of the number of daily trips. Failure to comply means that particular company will not be eligible to receive payment," said Loke, who added that digitalisation is also increasingly being employed, especially in fare payments.

"Secondly, the government will make it compulsory for cashless transactions for fare payment, and operators will receive financial aid to install the necessary equipment to make this happen, up to a maximum of RM450 per month. Cashless payments ensure that there will no longer be losses in revenue (from the cashbox)," he said.

Another improvement is the

introduction of three-year contracts, which demonstrates the government's commitment to provide quality stage bus services to the people. Previous contracts ranged from a year to two.

"However, I want to remind everyone that not every company will be given a three-year contract. Only those that score at least 70% in the performance evaluation during the 2021-2022 period will be given a three-year contract.

"Those who score between 50% and 70% will be given contracts of a year, while those that fail to hit 50% will not be offered any new contract," said Loke.

Present at the event yesterday were 37 stage bus companies from all over the country, with 26 of them receiving a three-year deal, with the rest given a year-long deal.

ISBSF was established in 2012

to help cover the daily operating costs of the bus stop operators involved, following losses incurred due to unprofitable routes, to prevent these bus companies from terminating these services.

Complementing ISBSF is the Stage Bus Service Transformation (SBST) that began in 2015 in places like Kangar, Seremban, Ipoh, and Kuala Terengganu.

Meanwhile, Loke also announced that Prasarana Malaysia Bhd — operator of the MRT, LRT, monorail and Sunway BRT, will display publicly how it is meeting its KPIs.

On Wednesday, he said a new KPI system and monthly updates will be posted on social media starting May, and this will chiefly revolve around how far trains can run (in kilometres) before breaking down for more than five minutes, a universal measurement known as mean kilometres between failures (MKBF).

Loke said at present, the MKBF data was only disclosed to the ministry, but the public will soon be able to know the reliability of the rail system.

"Technical issues or delay beyond five minutes affects the MKBF, which at present stands at 150,000km (for Prasarana), and our target for MKBF is 1,000,000km by 2026," he said after breaking fast with Rapid Rail staff at its Lembah Subang depot in Petaling Jaya.

In addition, Loke said there will also be weekly reports on maintenance of facilities, escalators and lifts, along with ridership.

He added through such disclosures and updates, the public would be kept informed about the state of services, and this would also ensure Prasarana continues to improve the reliability and quality of its services.

## Industry players ready to work with govt to deal with shortage

**PETALING JAYA:** The Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILT) in Malaysia has weighed in on the shortage of bus captains in the country.

In a statement yesterday, CILT Malaysia secretary-general Dr Mohd Nasir Alias said as a professional body representing the logistics and transportation industries in the nation, CILT Malaysia viewed the recent issue of bus driver shortage with great concern following its extensive engagement with players in the transport ecosystem.

As an industry lead body (ILB) for the logistics and transport industry, CILT Malaysia has been working with the various stakeholders to raise the quality of professionalism in the industry.

"This was demonstrated especially in facing the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic, whereby CILT Malaysia managed to bring together the Malaysia Shipowners Association, Freight Forwarding Associations, port operators as well as port authorities for dialogues to increase awareness as well as putting up recommendation towards a solution.

"One of the main areas identified during these sessions was driver shortage, for buses or trucks," said Mohd Nasir, who added that a key challenge in attracting drivers was the perception that there was "no future".

"Consequently, CILT Malaysia has come up with a programme to develop drivers into a talent management group with a clear career path. Apart from being trained on the aspects of driver competency and skills, the career path would allow the drivers to plan their future better.

"Additionally, efforts should be made to improve working conditions and remunerations for bus drivers to encourage more to join the industry, and this includes ensuring that drivers are provided with proper rest breaks and adequate remuneration," said Mohd Nasir, who also expressed his concern for the shortage of drivers in the bus industry, especially during the festive season.

He said it was crucial that measures were taken to address this issue to ensure Malaysians would be able to travel safely.

"The high cost of obtaining the licences to become a bus driver is a contributing factor to the shortage of drivers. The government should consider reviewing the fees and providing financial assistance to those who wish to pursue a career in the bus industry.

"We understand the challenges faced by bus operators during this festive season, and we hope that the relevant authorities will take urgent action to address the shortage of drivers," said Mohd Nasir, adding that CILT Malaysia and its partners, such as the Malaysia Institute of Transport, were ready to work with the Transport Ministry to address the shortage of drivers.

## Penang seeks Nadma's help for cloud seeding

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**GEORGE TOWN:** Penang is seeking assistance from the National Disaster Management Agency (Nadma) to help carry out cloud seeding operations to avoid a potential water crisis here.

Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) chief executive officer K. Pathmanathan said Nadma's aid was needed to induce rainfall in the Ayer Itam and Teluk Bahang dams on Penang island.

As of yesterday, the effective capacities of both dams were 49% and 50.7% respectively, a significant drop compared to 82.5% and 64% recorded on Jan 1 this year.

"Due to climate change, low rainfall was recorded in the Air Itam and Teluk Bahang dams.

"The effective capacities of these two dams have been projected to drop further, towards critical levels, if the current dry season prolongs to August.

"Penang must avoid a potential water supply crisis that may cause undue suffering for 1.74 million people and disrupt the socioeconomic activities.



**Going down:** The water level at the Air Itam dam has dropped and is a cause for concern for Penangites. — LIM BENG TATT/The Star

"We need urgent assistance from Nadma to engage a qualified company or agency to conduct cloud seeding," he said in a statement yesterday.

Pathmanathan said the state government had approved a RM400,000 allocation for cloud seeding over the two dams.

After referring the matter to the Meteorological Department, he said there were no companies

which could meet the criteria and conditions set by the Civil Aviation Authority of Malaysia.

"As such, the Penang government has no choice but to get help from Nadma to intervene and facilitate cloud seeding," he said.

On Tuesday, Pathmanathan urged Penangites to use water wisely as water levels at the two key dams dropped to only half their effective capacities.

He said the low rainfall in the dams' water catchment areas and high water demand were the key factors that caused the capacities of the dams to drop drastically.

State environment committee chairman Phee Boon Poh was quoted as saying that there were concerns of temperatures rising further as Thailand faced unprecedented high temperatures recently.