



Transport Minister Anthony Loke and Penang Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow being briefed on a development project by the Railway Assets Corporation and Penang Housing Board in Seberang Prai yesterday.
BERNAMA PIC BY

Free ferry, bus rides for Thaipusam in Penang

SEBERANG JAYA: The Transport Ministry yesterday announced complimentary ferry and feeder bus rides for this year's Thaipusam celebration.

The ferry rides will be offered free for 50 hours between 12.01am on Jan 24 and 2am on Jan 26.

The feeder bus rides to the Arulmigu Balathandayuthapani Temple in Kebun Bunga, Penang island, will be from 2pm on Jan 24 and between 5.30am and 1am on Jan 25.

Transport Minister Anthony Loke said the gesture was aimed at supporting the cultural festivities and ease travel for those cel-

ebrating one of the country's most significant events.

He said after Batu Caves in Kuala Lumpur, Thaipusam in Penang was also celebrated on a grand scale.

"To seamlessly manage the influx of visitors and ensure a memorable experience for all, Penang Port Commission (PPC) and Penang Port Sdn Bhd (PPSB) have meticulously prepared for this surge.

"We hope this free service will facilitate transport for the people," he told newsmen.

Elaborating, Loke said taking the ferry during Thaipusam would help alleviate congestion

and reduce traffic flow on the island.

"This initiative encourages passengers to use public transport, encouraging a more sustainable and efficient means of transportation," he added.

Loke said although PPC and PPCB would be sacrificing revenue for the two days, that was one of the operating conditions that the government had imposed on them.

"In a year, there are several days where we will provide free services, including Thaipusam.

"We will announce from time to time the free services to be provided during the main festivals,"

he said, adding that the provision of free services was an experimental implementation in an effort to reduce traffic congestion.

He said this measure was an experiment, and if it succeeded in reducing congestion, the same approach might be used for other major festivals.

It was previously reported that Keretapi Tanah Melayu Bhd would provide free KTM Komuter services in the Klang Valley on Jan 24 and Jan 25 for Thaipusam. Additional KTM Komuter services will operate non-stop for four days from Jan 23 to Jan 26, with 28 stations operating 24 hours during the period.