

# 'Ensure those behind the wheels are right for the job'

**PADANG RENGAS:** It is the responsibility of bus operators and owners to ensure that the drivers they hire have valid driving licences, said Transport Minister Datuk Seri Kong Cho Ha.

"If they do not have a licence, they should not be allowed to drive," he said.

Speaking after launching the twin-bore Berapit Tunnel breakthrough – which is part of the electrified double-tracking railway project – in Bukit Berapit here yesterday, Kong added that the onus was on operators to check on the condition of their buses to ensure that they were roadworthy.

Seven people from the 4B Youth Movement from Kampung Siong in Kedah were killed and 39 others injured when the driver lost control of the bus at the 38th km of Jalan Genting Sempah near the Karak Highway last Friday.

The bus driver, S. Muthumani, 36, claimed he once had a driving licence but it was suspended by the Road Transport Department because it did not recognise the driving school he had gone to.

On the tunnel breakthrough, MMC-Gamuda Joint Venture executive director Datuk Azmi Mat Nor said the Berapit tunnel was 70% completed.

»If they do not have a licence, they should not be allowed to drive«



DATUK SERI KONG CHO HA

"We still need to complete the infrastructure and its tunnel system," he said, adding that it was expected to be ready by the end of next year.

The Berapit tunnel will be the longest railway twin-tunnel in South East Asia.

Other significant engineering features of the Ipoh-Batang Padang double tracking project include a 3.5km marine viaduct that would be built across Bukit Merah in Perak and a swing bridge in Prai, Penang.