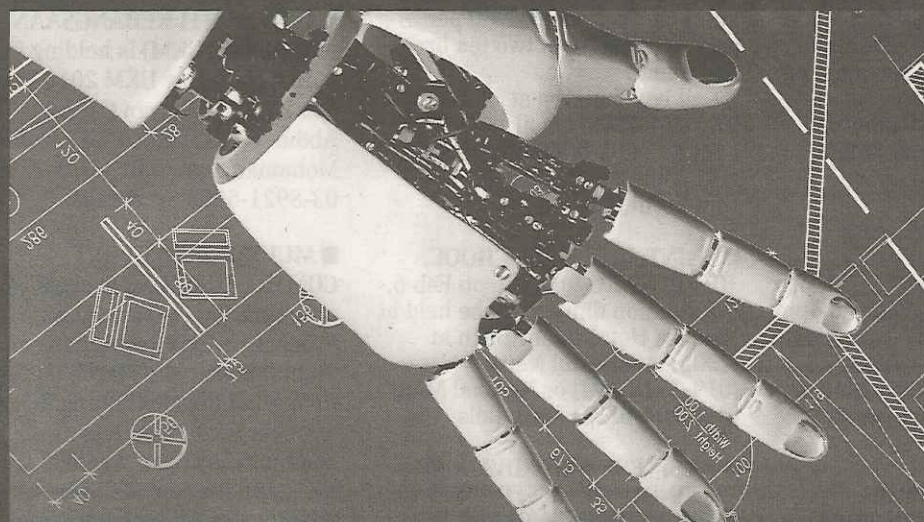


U · C · T · I  
A · P · I · I · T

ASIA PACIFIC UNIVERSITY COLLEGE  
OF TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

ASIA PACIFIC INSTITUTE OF  
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY



# ENGINEER Your Success

SCHOOL OF  
ENGINEERING



Business | Computing and IT | Services and Tourism | Media | Computer Games | Engineering

## FOUR-YEAR DEGREES IN ASSOCIATION WITH STAFFORDSHIRE UNIVERSITY, UK

- B.Eng (Hons) in Electrical & Electronic Engineering  
KPT/JPS(PA6907)02/12
- B.Eng (Hons) in Electronic Engineering with specialism in Information Technology  
KPT/JPS(PA6908)02/12
- B.Eng (Hons) in Telecommunication Engineering  
KPT/JPS(PA6909)02/12
- B.Eng (Hons) in Mechatronic Engineering  
KPT/JPS(PA6910)02/12
- Diploma in Electrical & Electronic Engineering  
KPT/JPS(PA8890)11/13



## YOUR ROUTE TO SUCCESS

Our programmes are designed to provide flexibility and choice. You can either start with the Degree Foundation or directly enter the first year of the degree, depending on your previous qualifications. All degrees have the same modules in the first year so that you can decide which of our Engineering degrees you would like to choose in the second year and continue in the third and final years to graduation. On graduation with an accredited degree you will be able to register as a Graduate Member leading the way to be a Professional Engineer with the **Board of Engineers Malaysia** after sufficient working experience and on fulfilling their requirements. This will allow you to use the title 'Ir.' (Ingenieur).

- Internationally Benchmarked Education • Technology Enabled Learning
- A Wide Range of Industry Relevant Courses

## COME TO OUR INFO DAY!

24 Jan 2010 (Sunday)  
9am to 5pm

Free shuttle service provided  
from Bukit Jalil LRT Station

## EXTENDED COUNSELLING HOURS THROUGHOUT JAN 2010

8.30am to 7pm (Mon-Fri)  
10am to 4pm (Sat & Sun)

For further information, call

**03 8996 1000**

[www.ucti.edu.my](http://www.ucti.edu.my)

## APIIT Education Group

MALAYSIA • PAKISTAN • INDIA • SRI LANKA

Technology Park Malaysia, Bukit Jalil, 57000 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.  
Tel: 603-8996 1000. Fax: 603-8996 1001. Email: [info@ucti.edu.my](mailto:info@ucti.edu.my)

## LEARNING CURVE COMMENT

# Walk the thought

THE closest we can get to sustainable (today's buzzword) living is by walking.

Literally walking with our two feet. When we walk the walk, we wander into topics such as philosophy and spirituality, the urban landscape, health and heart. Most of the time, we think that walking is merely for moving from one place to another.

Let us briefly delve into an intellectual history of walking. In doing so, we engage ourselves in the linkage between architecture and language.

When Aristotle was setting up a school in Athens, he was assigned a plot of land. On the land stood shrines to Apollo and the Muses. Connected to a shrine was a covered colonnade or walk (*peripatos*), which gave Aristotle's school its name, and its lecturers theirs — the peripatetic philosophers.

It was along the colonnade that Aristotle lectured while walking up and down. So began the Peripatetic School where "Aristotle and teachers walked habitually and extensively while teaching" — uniting walking with thinking.

Walk the thought if you like.

Accounts about the meaning of walking have been personal, descriptive and, I must stress, they embody some form of alienation.

Rebecca Solnit in *Wanderlust: A History of Walking* notes that its meaning cannot be found in philosophy; but in poetry, novels, letters, diaries, travellers' accounts and first-person essays.

William Wordsworth made walking central to his life and an art to a degree almost unparalleled before or since. He seemed to have gone walking nearly every day of his long life, and through the activity he encountered the world, which influenced his poetry.

A road is a sight on perspective — something that I enjoy while walking — lined with trees or buildings. Roads have long conditioned my sense of perspectival space. But then, Wordsworth described it better:

*I love a public road; few sights there are*

*That please me more — such object had had power*

*O'er my imagination since the dawn Of childhood, when its disappearing line*

*Seen daily afar off, on one bare steep Beyond the limits which my feet had trod*

*Was like a guide into eternity, At least to things unknown and without bound.*

In my schooldays, I used to walk for miles (before the kilometre disrupted our sense of distance).

The field fronting Penang Free School at leafy Green Lane was space for walking — along and across. We walked, thought and talked. I remember Azman Zain and M. Vijayandran.

The school compound was huge by today's standards, lined on one side by mature angasana trees and at the other end of the field, a pavilion.

The walks were an education in themselves. Walking was the school's hidden curriculum, even to the teachers.

I must not forget to mention the road along Green Lane and Scotland Road

which provided a pleasant walk then.

Walking has long sustained man's sanity. It is an institution. Walking, ideally, is a state in which the mind, the body and the world are aligned, as though they were a trio of characters finally in conversation together, three notes suddenly making a chord, wrote Solnit, an author and essayist with more than five books and articles on visual art, public space, landscape and environmental issues.

She argued for the necessity of preserving time and space in which to walk in a world built for the motor car and other machines. Indeed, much can be learnt from walking.

But we hardly walk (or learn) anymore. We build communities and cities for motorised vehicles. There is little, or no space to walk. We design our built environment without the pedestrian in mind. There is little or no connectivity. Our cityscapes are machine-dominated. Even small towns, such as Bandar Seri Iskandar, Perak, where I am staying, are not spared.

You need some form of a motorised transportation to move around. We reside in our private comfort zone of the vehicle, perhaps deliberately hiding ourselves from others behind the tinted glass of the vehicle and not necessarily the glare of the sun. We alienate walking.

We cannot even walk safely — there are not enough five-foot ways for walking. We share the same space with cars and buses, making our environment not pedestrian-friendly. And being people-friendly is also Earth-friendly. This was expressed by Japanese architect and urban planner Shunya Susuki, an advocate of life at walking speed (See *Learning Curve*, March 8 2009 and pages H22 and 23 for more).

Fukuoka-based Susuki, former coordinating officer for UN Habitat Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, believes in matching the pace of life with walking speed, which will reduce traffic accidents and crime, and engage people at pedestrian level. This does mean that we do not need other modes of transportation. There are bicycles and "green vehicles".

Walking is at the same time History and Geography. It evokes the complexity of time, space and place. Modern man lives in compressed time — globalisation and the death of distance.

We have evolved, so we think. But life at walking speed advocates the decompression of time, space, habits, thoughts and language. Modern society measures itself against its ability to evolve in tandem with technology. Walking is devolution — back to the source of sustainability.

I did not have to wrestle with vehicles at Minneapolis, Minnesota, where I studied for three years. Daily, I walked for 20 to 25 minutes, crossing the

A. MURAD  
MERICAN





## LEARNING CURVE



Walking has created trade routes and generated local and cross-continental senses of place.

Mississippi River to the Twin Cities campus from my apartment on the East Bank at University Avenue. I enjoyed my walks all year round — winter, spring, summer and fall. Along the way, I engaged myself with the trees, falling leaves, sun, snow and the sights and sounds of squirrels and birds.

And I delightfully absorbed the different colours of the changing seasons.

In the history of mankind, walking engages us to look for something. Walking is as sacred as the pilgrimage. It is premised on the idea that the sacred is not entirely immaterial. There is a geography of spiritual power. The travel and arrival is fundamental.

I encountered *Wanderlust* some years ago. It prompted a response to my frustration of not being able to enjoy long walks any more — one due to work (except during lectures — I do not teach sitting down) and the other, the apathy and hostility towards walking by our planners and policy makers. I may have succumbed to that.

Even our universities do not generally promote walking on campus. They are turning into city centres, choked with traffic and pollution. We do not teach students to walk. We cannot blame them because many campuses were not conceived, designed and constructed with sustainability in mind.

But we must not allow walking to be taken for granted. Our environment has both shaped and been shaped by the imagination through spaces passed by our two feet.

Solnit waxed eloquent that walking has created paths, roads and trade routes; generated local and cross-continental senses of place, shaped cities and parks; created maps, guidebooks and gear; and further afield, a vast library of walking stories and poems, pilgrimages, mountaineering expeditions, meanders and summer picnics.

"The landscapes, urban and rural, gestate the stories, and the stories bring us back to the sites of this history."

Walking affects everybody. The history of walking is an amateur one. It is everyone's experience. "I like walking because it is slow, and I suspect that the mind, like the feet, works at about three miles an hour. If this is so, then modern life is moving faster than the speed of thought, or thoughtfulness," Solnit related. That sounds much like life at walking speed.

To recall Wordsworth, walking is being, not becoming. It is about space and place. If you observe our cities — and I mean places that we have built that we call "towns", urban centres, suburban neighbourhoods and the like, there is an absence of public space where one can consume the walk.

I used to stay in USJ Subang Jaya, Petaling Jaya and commute to my workplace in Shah Alam where public space in both townships has not been well conceived.

We build modern houses, compartmentalise our area, and the only "public space" is the road fronting our houses. The roads in our neighbourhoods do not have pavements. Most sections are now gated. The pedestrian is looked upon with suspicion.

We live in an architecture of fear — of machines and motorised vehicles, snatch thefts, muggers and burglars. We are the nemesis of sustainability.

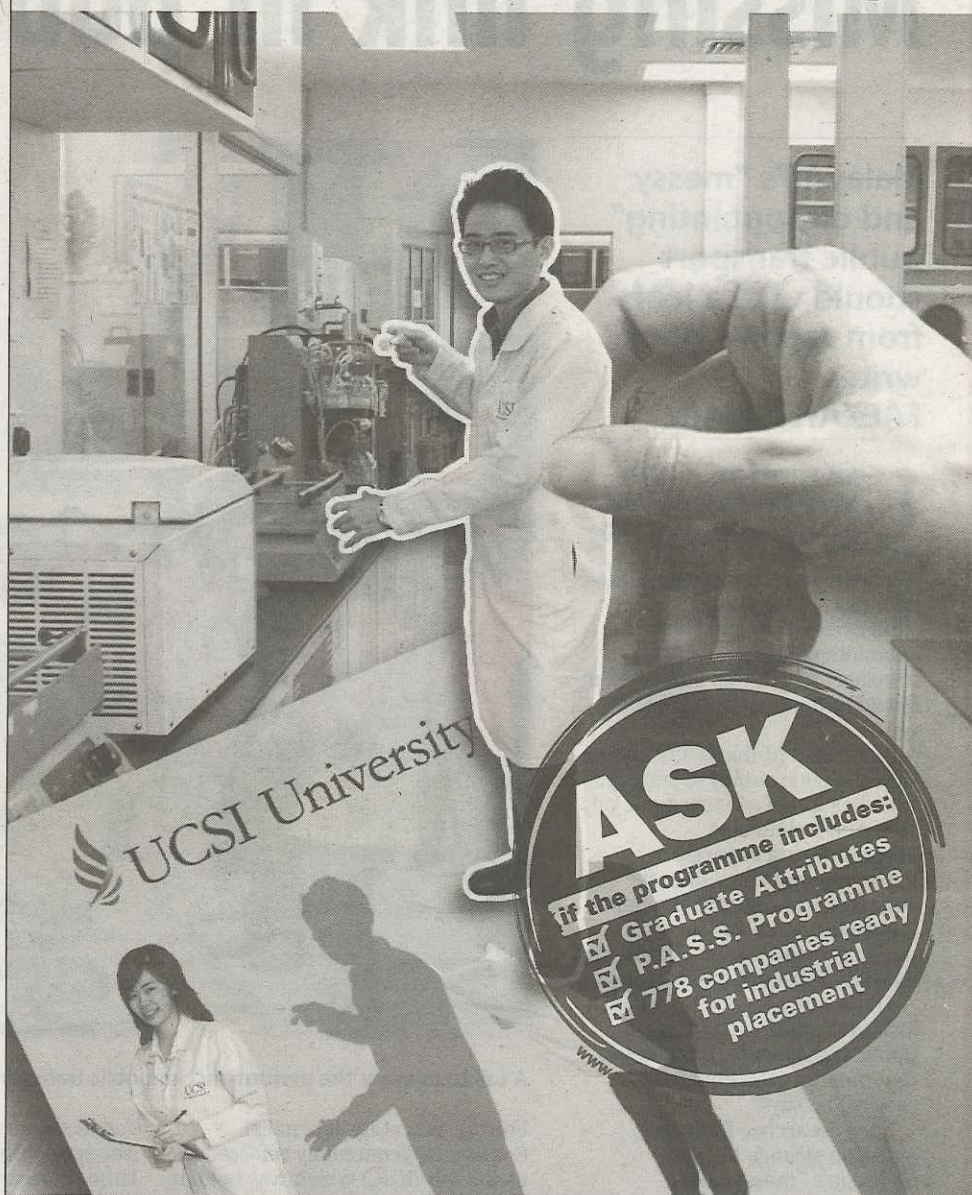
University campuses are ideal places to advocate walking and should be promoted as such — perhaps a day in a week to celebrate bipedalism. We miss exploring the walk, the thought and the terrain.

I fear that the erosion of ethics (both in the sociological and technological sense) in our society will kill the simple pleasures of the pedestrian, and bury (the sustainability of) the thought.

■ The writer is a professor at the Department of Management and Humanities, Universiti Teknologi PETRONAS, Bandar Seri Iskandar, Perak. Email him at [amurad\\_noormerican@petronas.com.my](mailto:amurad_noormerican@petronas.com.my)

**Our holistic curriculum equips you with real work experience.**

**NOW you are career ready !**



## FACULTY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

- M.Sc. Applied Sciences, by Research
- M.Sc. Biotechnology
- M.Sc. Biotechnology with Business Management
- B.Sc. (Hons.) Biotechnology
- B.Sc. (Hons.) Food Science & Nutrition
- Foundation in Science

(KA 10188; 07/2014), (KA 9411; 05/2014), (KA 9903; 08/2014), (A 4410; 06/2012), (A 4713; 06/2012), (A 1457; 11/2010)

Walk-in  
Scholarship Interview

**CAMPUS WEEK**

**24 - 31 Jan 2010**  
10 am - 5 pm

[www.ucsi.edu.my/onlineenquiry](http://www.ucsi.edu.my/onlineenquiry)



UCSI University, Kuala Lumpur Campus (KPT/JPT/DFT/US/W06)  
No. 1, Jalan Menara Gading, UCSI Heights, Cheras, 56000 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.  
Tel (603) 9101 8880 Fax (603) 9102 2614

UCSI University, Terengganu Campus (KPT/JPT/DFT/US/T01)  
Bukit Khor, PT 11065, Mukim Rusila, 21600 Marang, Terengganu, Malaysia.  
Tel (609) 628 1880 / 1889 Fax (609) 628 1885

UCSI University, Sarawak Campus (KPT/JPT/DFT/US/Y04)  
Lot 2498, Block 16, KCLD, Jalan Tun Jugah, 93350 Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia. Tel (6082) 455 255 Fax (6082) 455 015

A member of  
UCSI Group



# Missing link in public transport

Malaysia's "messy and disappointing" public transport should take a leaf from Japan's book, writes  
**FAEZAH ISMAIL**

UNIVERSITI Kebangsaan Malaysia's Professor Abd Rahim Md Nor, like many Malaysians who use public transport here, has plenty to say about its shortcomings.

He even wrote an article examining Malaysia's public transport which was published in *Berita Minggu* on Nov 15, last year.

"Our main problem has to do with the poor quality of service. That has not been sorted out yet," says Abd Rahim (see accompanying report).

The missing element in the equation is an agency to monitor the performance of Malaysia's public transport, adds Abd Rahim, who specialises in public transport.

There are 13 agencies which look after different aspects of public transport here but none that monitors the quality of service, he says.

The researcher finds the omission strange because Malaysia's "messy and disappointing" public transport, as environmentalist Gurmit Singh puts it, is a contentious issue that never fails to grab headlines.

Sustainable transport is difficult to promote for the simple reason that Malaysia's public transport is unreliable, says Abd Rahim, who is head of the Postgraduate Environmental Management Programme, Faculty of Social Science and Humanities, UKM.

The issue of sustainable transport and the initiatives taken by countries in the Asia Pacific region were explored at the recent



A call to monitor the performance of public transport.

Fourth Asian City Journalist Conference (commonly referred to as the 4th ACJC) which was held in Fukuoka City, Japan.

Journalists from Japan (*The Nishinippon Newspaper*), South Korea (*Busanilbo Daily News*), Vietnam (*Saigon Giai Phong Investment Finance Newspaper*), the Philippines (*Philippine Daily Inquirer*), Thailand (*Prachachat Business Newspaper*), Indonesia (*KOMPAS Jakarta*), Singapore (*Lianhe Zaobao*) and Malaysia (*New Straits Times*) discussed green transport issues in their countries at the meeting, which was organised by UN Habitat Regional Office for Asia and the

Pacific (Fukuoka), *The Nishinippon Newspaper* and Japan's Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism.

Malaysia's public transport seems dismal compared with those in other countries. Take Fukuoka City.

A trip to Fukuoka International Airport from Nishitetsu Inn Fukuoka, which is in the Tenjin area of Fukuoka City, is a trouble-free experience even for a foreigner who does not speak Japanese and is unfamiliar with the city.

(Tenjin is the information, shopping, business and cultural centre of Fukuoka City where

people from other regions in Kyushu as well as Korea and China gather).

Hop on a train — the subway station is a short walk away — which goes to a destination where a free shuttle bus will whisk you off to the airport.

The whole process — walking out of the hotel, striding to the subway station, getting on the train and boarding the shuttle bus — takes under 45 minutes, allowing for minor distractions including stopping and asking people for directions to the correct subway station and platform for the airport-bound train.

Let's consider the picture in

Kuala Lumpur.

The journey time to Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA) from KL Sentral via KLIA Ekspres is under 30 minutes.

But going to KL Sentral from the city area by train can be time consuming.

Unlike the case in Fukuoka City, it is generally not an easy walk to a light rail transit (LRT) station to catch the KL Sentral-bound train.

And if you take a taxi, the driver will have to battle against traffic jams to get you there.

The positive public transport encounter in Fukuoka City makes it easy to understand why 60 per cent of citizens there opt for public transport to commute to work, according to a 2005 report.

Fukuoka City Hall official Shunya Susuki (more about him on pages H22 and 23) is among the 60 per cent of Japanese in Fukuoka City who use public transport to get to the office.

Susuki, who is director of the Earthquake-Resistance and Safety Section at Fukuoka City Hall, likes to travel on public transport because he "hates traffic jams and automobile exhaust emissions".

He usually takes the bus to work because the bus stop is close to his home in Toyohama town.

He can also catch the train to work if he wants but the nearest subway station is some distance away.

The travel time by bus to his



Abd Rahim Md Nor



Gurmit Singh



Shunya Susuki



Ryuji Tanaka





Some taxi drivers do not use their meters.

office, which is in Tenjin, is "around 30 minutes".

Quoting March 2009 figures, Susuki says an average Japanese family has 1.086 cars while an average Fukuoka prefecture family has 1.091 cars.

"Fukuoka City's public transport will be better when the connection between the subway and bus systems is improved," he says.

The *Nishinippon Newspaper* vice editor-in-chief Ryuji Tanaka reveals that Fukuoka City has been promoting car-free days since 1993 and it designated every Friday as such a day in 2007.

"People in the city are encouraged to use public transport on that day and are eligible for one-day discount tickets for bus and subway services as well as free parking in the Tenjin parking area," says Tanaka, who was a panellist at the 4th ACJC.

For further information on Fukuoka City especially its position as a strategic place for economic activity and transportation, visit this website (<http://www.city.fukuoka.lg.jp/promo/english/video01/index.html>).

Abd Rahim is full of praise for the public transport in Sweden and Denmark in terms of connectivity and high-quality service.

"Sweden's reputation for reliable and efficient public transport networks is well deserved," writes Bob Carter (<http://www.communityofsweden.com/Pages/Stories/Story.aspx?storyId=723>) of *Nature Travels*, the United Kingdom specialists for outdoor experiences in Sweden.

"Its web of well-organised public transport links offers regular connections to even the furthest reaches of the country."

"Where it is necessary to take a combination of train and bus to reach your destination, bus timetables are often thoughtfully coordinated with train arrival and

departure times."

Danish cities Odense and Copenhagen are famous for bicycle transportation, which along with walking are sustainable modes of transport.

Wikipedia statistics ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transport\\_in\\_Denmark](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transport_in_Denmark)) show that nearly one-fifth of all trips in Copenhagen are by bicycle.

For home-to-work commutes, 36 per cent of all trips are by bicycle.

Denmark will present Odense's experience with bicycle transportation at EXPO Shanghai 2010 (May 1-Oct 31).

Odense and 59 other cities will participate in the Urban Best Practice Area in Shanghai and the Danish city's Best Practice case is called The Revival of the Bicycle.

The transport sector has a major environmental impact and a large carbon footprint, say researchers.

"Transportation accounts for 14 per cent of global greenhouse gases (GHG); that means our dependency on green modes of transportation such as the LRT system will become more pivotal," writes Ashraff Sanusi from Cardiff University in a letter to the *New Straits Times* which was published on Dec 23, last year.

The transport system will be among the first issues that must be addressed if Malaysia is to keep its promise to cut carbon emissions by 40 per cent within the next 10 years, he adds.

Abd Rahim and Gurmit Singh do not think that Malaysia has started its green transportation drive although the LRT system has long been introduced.

Those promoting low-pollution and pollution-free sustainable transport — buses, LRT systems, bicycles and walking — insist that an integrated package of policies to build alternatives to private vehicles must be put in place before Malaysians can be inspired to use public transport.

Persuading more Malaysians to use public transport is a green initiative, says Gurmit Singh.

Currently, only 16 per cent of Malaysians travel by public transport for economic and social connections.

Whether the target of 40 per cent public transport users is attainable by 2012 is a matter for debate.

Gurmit Singh says the goal should be 60 per cent — and Japan's Fukuoka City has shown that it is an achievable aim — rather than 40 per cent and "we can only call ourselves green" when that is gained.

He argues that the most important issue is accessibility and not mobility.

The poor and those without private vehicles in Malaysia still do not have adequate access to public transport to fulfil their economic, educational and social obligations.

Walking and perhaps cycling are the only options in areas ill served by public transport.

As far as research in the field is concerned, Abd Rahim says this is a new area even for him.

An experiment with a natural gas vehicle — a bus — was carried out in Putrajaya 12 years ago but it is unclear whether there is any progress.

"The petrol price here is still low in comparison with our cost of living and fuel charges in countries of a similar economic status," says Abd Rahim.

That hardly motivates people to make the switch from private vehicles to public transport and operators to change from petrol or diesel to alternative fuel, he adds.

Countries with efficient public transport have implemented them within the context of creating more vibrant and livable sustainable cities — both Gurmit Singh and Abd Rahim emphasise this point.

They offer ample lessons to Malaysia.

■ faezah@nst.com.my

## Monitor and enforce standards



A common grouse is buses do not come on time.

MALAYSIANS make no secret of their distrust of the public transport here.

Currently, only 16 per cent of Malaysians use public transport to get to work, shop, and meet family and friends.

The current list of grouses sounds familiar: buses do not come on time; taxi drivers do not use their meters and charge unpredictable, arbitrary fares; the light rail transit system does not cover a wide area; and a lack of cycling paths and pedestrian walkways in towns and cities.

The issue dates back to the early 1970s when the demand for public transport rose exponentially to serve the new urban population, says Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia academic Professor Abd Rahim Md Nor.

Malaysia also fares badly in road safety. There are still too many deaths from car crashes. "Car and motorbike crazy" — that is how observers

describe urban Malaysia.

The average Malaysian family owns 2.5 cars and teens on motorcycles continue to irritate and worry their parents.

Ongoing brainstorming sessions between the authorities and public transport experts underline the government's commitment to finding solutions to problems, says Abd Rahim, who specialises in public transport.

The proposed formation of the Public Land Transport Commission or its Malay acronym SPAD is seen as another positive development.

SPAD, which was supposed to have been set up last year, would act as a single authority to monitor and enforce service standards as well as offer a long-term plan for urban public transport.