

# Thumbs up for insurance scheme

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## QUALITY PROTECTION:

Government issues new tender to select company to provide coverage

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THE government will foot the bill for the two-year insurance coverage of 1.5 million students who take school buses.

Parents will not have to pay anything under the scheme, which provides coverage of up to RM100,000 for accidents, perma-

nent disabilities and death.

Land Public Transport Commission (SPAD) chairman Tan Sri Syed Hamid Albar said the commission was still ironing out the details, including selecting the right insurance company to provide the scheme.

"We had chosen a tender, but because of several issues with the company, we are again accepting proposals from a more qualified tender.

"As a result, there might be a slight delay in the implementation. However, we are still hopeful of implementing it in January," he said yesterday.

Under the scheme, students will

be automatically insured, provided they travelled on school buses that were registered with SPAD.

"The insurance scheme only applies to school buses that are registered with the commission.

"Students opting to take private school buses are also insured, as long as these buses are licensed by SPAD," said a commission spokesperson.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak had announced the scheme when tabling the 2013 Budget in Parliament in September.

National Parent-Teacher Association chairman Datuk Mohd Ali Hassan lauded the scheme, saying

*"We are still hopeful of implementing it in January."*

*Tan Sri Syed Hamid Albar  
Land Public Transport Commission chairman*

that parents would feel more assured of their children's safety.

He said in addition to the scheme, SPAD should also make sure that the condition of school buses and drivers were top notch.

"Bus drivers should understand and adhere to the safety procedures involving students, such as ensuring their buses are not too packed," he said.

Ali urged the authorities to introduce a second driver for school buses.

"A co-driver can replace the designated bus driver if he is ill or unfit to drive."

He said SPAD should conduct regular random checks to ensure school bus operators had valid licences and obeyed safety procedures when ferrying students.

"Parents and teachers are also important observers and should re-

port errant drivers to the authorities," he added.

National Union of the Teaching Profession president Hashim Adnan said the safety of schoolchildren would be better assured as a result of the scheme.

"This will make going to school much better for students throughout country. Insurance companies also stand to benefit from this," he said.

Negri Sembilan Rural Development, Consumer Affairs and Public Facilities Committee chairman Datuk Hasim Rusdi lauded the move, adding that currently, only the school buses were insured but not the students.

He said parents had often expressed their concern for the safety of their children when they take the school bus. **Additional reporting**

**by Maizatul Ranai**