

# KTM theft: Lives at stake

By PAULINE ALMEIDA

THIS advertisement (right), in case you missed it while flipping through the newspapers, is a timely reminder you could be risking the lives of others by stealing railway track components.

Titled "Steal and You'll Be Derailing Other People's Lives", the advertisement by the Transport Ministry reminds would-be thieves that stealing the components "can cause the derailment of trains, which in turn causes serious injuries or even fatalities".

Simply put, the ministry and Keretapi Tanah Melayu Berhad (KTMB) want the public to respect lives and the public transport system in the country.

Why did the authorities resort to this? Apparently, they were alarmed at the high number of thefts involving rail fasteners and communication linkages in the rail system in the past five years.

These copper track components fetch a high price.

Therefore, culprits have no qualms stealing them to make a fast buck and KTMB has not been able to contain

it despite placing guards at strategic places.

When items like the signaling cable are stolen, the train stops functioning and KTMB has to operate it manually.

However, missing track components cause trains to be derailed and affects system efficiency. This appeared to be KTMB's concern. "We advise the public against disturbing public property.

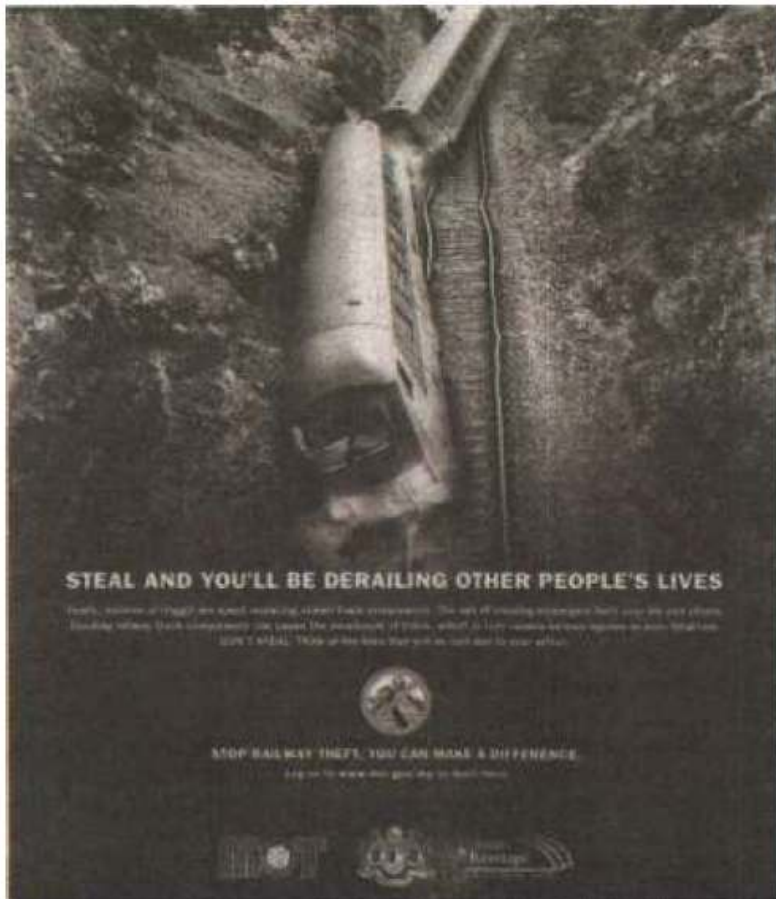
"We also request that those who witness such acts to alert us quickly," said Transport Ministry Railway Department director-general Anuar Kassim recently.

The losses involving track components for 2006 was valued at RM622,980, in 2007 (RM621,020) and Jan-September 2008 (RM1,077,310).

Meanwhile, reports lodged on losses for 2006 was 365; 2007 (426 reports) and 2008 (406 reports).

Deraillments that took place in 2005 were five, 2006 (19), 2007 (12) and between January and September this year, 17.

The value of components stolen along the Light Rail Transit since 2005 is said to be about RM2 million.



GRIM REMINDER: KTM's way of stopping thefts