

Public transport riding high

MORE PASSENGERS: Infrastructure improvements and initiatives boost ridership on trains and buses

NST 20/3/13 M S G.

PUBLIC transport ridership increased by 80,000 passengers per day last year, which is evidence that the government's efforts to improve the Urban Public Transport (UPT) system is yielding significant results.

Based on the 2012 Government Transformation Programme (GTP) report, public transport ridership recorded 930,468 trips last year, compared with 622,185 trips in the previous year.

At the same time, the number of passengers during peak hours increased to 334,598 last year from 226,184 in 2010.

The report concluded that the increase in ridership last year was because of the infrastructure improvements and initiatives taken by the government to reduce commuters' woes.

One of the focus areas of the UPT was to improve the rail networks for KTM Komuter and Light Rapid Transit (LRT) trains.

The addition of 37 KTM Komuter six-car trains in March last year improved the capacity of the rail line while reducing morning peak-hour waiting time from 45 minutes to 15.

The additional Komuter trains,

said the report, eased the morning rush and increased ridership by an additional 10,000 people daily.

"These accomplishments are especially meaningful since rail usage contributes about 40 per cent to the daily public transport ridership."

The expansion of LRT trains going on now will extend services further after its completion in 2015.

Another focus area was the issue of congested roads and inefficient bus service because of the lack of qualified drivers and equipment problems.

However, the problems were gradually addressed through the introduction of 470 new RapidKL buses, resulting in 4.04 million more passengers last year compared with 2011.

Efforts to improve the urban public transport also saw the upgrade of 1,116 bus stops, while the installation of another 272 new bus stops is under way in the Greater KL area.

UPT registered ridership growth

that outpaced each of the previous two years: for instance, its modal share (percentage of people using trains and buses) grew to 20 per cent last year from 16.4 per cent in 2011 and 17 per cent in 2010.

The report, however, said that although the initiatives had raised the numbers last year, the full impact of the initiatives would not be felt until subsequent years when there was greater take-up by the public together with greater service integration.

Despite the increase in ridership every year, UPT did not meet its modal share target of 25 per cent last year because of the rapidly growing private vehicle ownership of about 10,000 cars every week, owing to affordable fuel and vehicle costs.

The study said the reluctance of private owners to switch to public transport "owes to a lack of awareness or poor accessibility, connectivity and reliability".

The growth of rail, the only alternative to road transport in Kuala Lumpur, had not kept pace with the growth of roads as rail was not as profitable, it added.



The full impact of the initiatives would not be felt until subsequent years when there was greater take-up by the public.

Assessment on the Improvement of Urban Public Transport (UPT) initiative

INFOGRAPHIC: NST

KPI	2010-2012 target	Actual achievement	Results (%)
Ridership of public transport (during morning peak hours)	600,000	334,597	56
Population living within 400m of public transport route	72%	72%	100
KTM Komuter peak-load factor	100%	53%	189
RapidKL LRT Kelana Jaya line peak load factor	80%	83%	96
Bus peak-load factor	70%	87%	124
Passenger satisfaction	55%	73%	133
Weighted average ratio of public journey time to private journey time	1.60:1	1.43:1	112
Road safety (deaths per 10,000 vehicles)	3.01	2.8	108
TOTAL			111

However, the GTP 2.0 target under the UPT flagship for this year will focus on improving pull factors to encourage commuters to make the switch from private vehicle to public transport, while it is think-

ing of discouraging the use of private vehicles.

It said push and pull factors were expected to improve public transportation's modal share over the next three years.