

Improving public transport to drive country's progress

By Jerry Choong

jerrychoong@mmail.com.my

SHAH ALAM — The first trains of the extended Ampang and Kelana Jaya light rail transit (LRT) lines pulled out of the Putra Heights station at 6am yesterday, heralding a new chapter for public transportation.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said the extensions would be the catalyst of a complete transformation of the nation's public transportation system, adding that it would have a significant impact on the nation's socio-economic growth.

He said after he took over leadership of the country in 2009, he brainstormed with his Performance Management and Delivery Unit (Pemandu) and they recognised that one of the major challenges in the country's development was transportation.

Najib said the government therefore decided to prioritise public transportation under its National Key Result Areas initiative and the RM8 billion LRT extension was one of its efforts.

"And today, we have witnessed that the government of the day has delivered to the people of Malaysia," he said at the extension's launching.



Taking a swipe at former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Najib said public transportation in the country had been lacking.

“This is because my predecessor, who ruled for 22 years, did not pay much attention to public transport.

“As a result, a vacuum occurred. There was under-investment and a non-integrated system owned by various parties made Klang Valley public transportation incapable of handling the needs of a modern city and its worsening traffic congestion.”



Passengers at the Putra Heights station catch a connecting ride to the Sri Petaling station. — Picture by Ahmad Zamzahuri

The project by Prasarana Malaysia Berhad involves the launch of 12 new stations on the Kelana Jaya Line and 11 new stations on the Ampang Line, with an extension of 17.4km and 17.7km of the lines respectively.

With the new extension, Prasarana

estimates a daily increase of LRT users of up to 300,000 — 170,000 for the Kelana Jaya Line and 130,000 for the Ampang Line.

Prasarana chairman Tan Sri Ismail Adam said the LRT extension was an important project that would bring about greater convenience for the people who rely on public transportation.

Rapid Rail Sdn Bhd chief executive officer Ahmad Nizam Mohamed Amin said 15 new stations were opened in the Line Extension Project (LEP), including the Putra Heights interchange, which links the Kelana Jaya and Sri Petaling lines.

“From Putra Heights, you can choose whether to use the Kelana Jaya or Sri Petaling/Ampang line based on your destination,” he said in a statement. Rapid Rail is a subsidiary of Prasarana.

In addition to Putra Heights, the two new stations opened on the Sri Petaling/Ampang line were Puchong Prima and Puchong Perdana.

Nizam said the LEP also included connectivity with the Keretapi Tanah Melayu (KTM) Komuter and Sunway line Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) services.

“Connectivity to the BRT-Sunway line is provided at the USJ 7 station, while the interchange with the KTM Komuter Port Klang-Rawang line is at the Subang Jaya station. These are two new stations under the Kelana Jaya LEP,” he said.

The 10 other stations under the Kelana Jaya LEP are Lembah Subang,

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Ara Damansara, Glenmarie, SS15, SS18, Taipan, Wawasan, USJ21, Alam Megah and Subang Alam.

Nizam said Rapid Bus would also begin its feeder bus services to ensure customers get to their destinations with ease.

Details of the service and frequency of the buses can be found on www.myrapid.com.my. The public can also obtain more information on the Park ‘n Ride facility to park their cars if they do not wish to take the bus.

He said there would be no parking charges for the Park ‘n Ride zone for the first month of operation, and customers are also advised to use the MyRapid SMART 30 monthly package or SMART 7 weekly package to enjoy further savings.