

MAHATHIR-RAILWAY

BM

KUALA LUMPUR, MARCH 6 (BERNAMA) ^{9/4} DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD THIS' MORNING BECAME AN HONORARY TRAFFIC OFFICER OF MALAYAN RAILWAY WHEN HE TOOK UP THE GREEN FLAG TO FLAG OFF THE TWO EKSPRESS SINARAN PARI TO TRAINS SINGAPORE AND BUTTERWORTH AT THE COMMISSIONING OF THE NEW EXPRESS COACHES.

AMONG THOSE WHO WITNESSED THE CEREMONY WERE TRANSPORT MINISTER TAN SRI CHONG HON NYAN AND HIS DEPUTY DATUK ABU HASSAN OMAR, CABINET MINISTERS AND MEMBERS OF THE DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY.

EIGHT NEW COACHES INCLUDING THEIR LOCOMOTIVES LEFT ON THEIR NORTHWARD AND SOUTHWARD JOURNEYS AT 7.30 A.M. AS SOON AS THEY WERE FLAGGED OFF BY THE PRIME MINISTER.

THE DOA SELAMAT WAS SAID BEFORE THE FLAG OFF.

EARLIER, THE PRIME MINISTER, ACCOMPANIED BY TAN SRI CHONG AND DATUK ABU HASSAN AND MALAYAN RAILWAY GENERAL MANAGER DATUK AHMAD BADRI MOHAMAD BASIR, INSPECTED THE COACHES TO SEE THE AMENITIES IN THEM.

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THE NEW COACHES, MADE IN KOREA, ARE EQUIPPED WITH SEATS THAT CAN BE TURNED INTO SLEEPERETS, AND HAVE PIPED MUSIC AND VIDEO FOR THE AIR-CONDITIONED COACHES.

MALAYAN RAILWAY TRAFFIC DIRECTOR ENCIK MOHAMMAD ZIN YUSOP SAID THAT THE RAILWAY SIGNED AN AGREEMENT WITH THE KOREAN SHIPYARD AND ENGINEERING CORPORATION (KSEC) IN 1982 FOR THE SUPPLY OF 50 COACHES.

THE COACHES WERE ASSEMBLED AT THE MALAYSIA SHIPYARD ENGINEERING (MSE) AT PASIR GUDANG, JOHOR BAHRU. MALAYAN RAILWAY HAD SO FAR TAKEN DELIVERY OF 24 SUCH COACHES AND ANOTHER 26 WOULD BE DELIVERED IN STAGES BY THE MIDDLE OF THE YEAR.

ENCIK MOHAMMAD ZIN SAID THAT MALAYAN RAILWAY SPENT ABOUT \$32 MILLION ON THESE COACHES.

MALAYAN RAILWAY ALSO PLANNED TO REPLACE ALL THE OLD COACHES INCLUDING THOSE FOR THE EKSPRESS RAKYAT SERVICES.

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HE SAID THAT EACH LOCOMOTIVE COST ABOUT \$3 MILLION WHILE THE SECOND CLASS AIR-CONDITIONED EXECUTIVE COACH COST \$810,000, THE THIRD CLASS EXECUTIVE COACH \$437,000, THE AIR-CONDITIONED DAY AND NIGHT COACH \$787,000, THE BUFFET CARS \$900,000 AND THE FIRST CLASS AIR-CONDITIONED COACH 6800,000.

HE SAID THAT ACCORDING TO THE CONTRACT WITH THE KSEC, MALAYAN RAILWAY WOULD PURCHASE 15 LOCOMOTIVES, 16 AIR-CONDITIONED COACHES, 18 THIRD CLASS COACHES, EIGHT AIR-CONDITIONED DAY AND NIGHT COACHES AND FOUR BUFFET CARS AND FIRST CLASS AIR-CONDITIONED COACHES EACH.

THE BODIES OF THE LOCOMOTIVES WERE MADE IN JAPAN AND THE ENGINES IN FRANCE.

ENCIK MOHAMAD ZIN SAID THAT THERE WERE STILL ABOUT 100 OLD COACHES NOW IN SERVICE THAT HAD TO BE REPLACED.

- - BERNAMA 1037/LK