

Perseverance, dedication and efficiency the key, KTM told

PM: Rail service can be profitable

(P) Dr. M.
NST 12 SEP 1992

By K.P. Waran

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said rail travel could be revived and popularised if railway stations had shopping centres similar to the arcades at airport terminals.

Apart from making train journeys more interesting, this could also bring in more revenue for KTM Berhad, the corporatised Malayan Railway, the Prime Minister said.

A good service and reasonable fares would also encourage the people to opt for rail travel rather than by road or air, he said.

"There is potential for many other services, including bonded warehouse facilities, inland ports, container yards and parcels delivery.

"There is no reason why railway services cannot be profitable. What is needed is perseverance, a dedicated management and workers and the willingness to try out new ideas and approach-

es to improve efficiency and service," he said.

Dr Mahathir said this when launching KTM Berhad at the Kuala Lumpur railway station.

Since a huge investment was needed to improve rail services, he added that KTM should consider introducing electric-powered trains, double tracks and multi-level tracks.

In view of the high costs, the Government was willing to transfer its railway-related assets and land to KTM Bhd and Railway Assets Corporation (RAC) to be used to defray its development cost, Dr Mahathir added.

With the corporatisation of KTM with effect from last Aug 1, KTM Berhad is responsible for operating the rail services, while RAC holds all assets of the old KTM, which includes about 8,000ha of land here and in Singapore.

He said the future of the utility would be brighter if KTM Bhd was administered

by a dynamic management team. Privatising Malayan Railway through an orderly and structured programme could turn it into a progressive transportation company that does not have to be dependent on the Government.

The Prime Minister added that KTM Bhd should look at privatisation as a challenge to improve its efficiency and productivity to ensure the success of the Government's decision to corporatise it like several other utilities.

"The Government's decision to corporatise KTM is aimed at making it a commercially-oriented corporate body.

"This move will introduce a new era where KTM is given the responsibility and objectives to face future challenges," he added.

He said KTM should resolve to have a new determination to improve its ser-

PLEASE TURN TO
PAGE 2, COL 6

Be efficient, Dr M urges KTM workers

NSI 12 SEP 1992

□ FROM PAGE ONE

vices to meet the needs of the nation's development.

He also urged KTM employees to compete with those from Malaysia Airlines in providing an efficient service to commuters and reminded them that their wages and bonuses would depend on the profitability of the company they worked for.

He expressed confidence that KTM Bhd would not only be able to meet the demands of commuters but also serve the needs of the industrial sector by transporting goods efficiently and at reasonable rates.

He said the success of KTM Bhd would attract more investors to participate in the rail travel business.

"I hope and believe that relations between the management and the union will be harmonious. The workers should be given a say in improving the train services," said Dr Mahathir.

"Meetings between the two parties should not only be confined to discussions on salaries. Whether or not KTM Bhd succeeds will have a direct bearing on the employees' income.

"With the privatisation of KTM, the agency will no longer rely on financial aid from the Government for the payment of salaries and investment. The employees' welfare will depend on their efficiency and the type of services they provide.

"If the services are unsatisfactory and costly, clients will opt for road or air transport. If overheads are high and there are no profits, no one else can be blamed except KTM Bhd itself."

The Kuala Lumpur railway station itself took on a new look today for the launch of KTM Berhad as coloured lights flickered to rhythmic drum beats, a large screen showed footage of steaming old trains chugging along during the early years in Malaya and colour-

ful buntings and banners decorated every pillar.

It was a colourful ceremony and as Dr Mahathir pulled a lever, a video show of KTM's history began.

Several minutes later, a new train made its way to Platform Two to the applause of all those present.

For hundreds of invited guests and several hundred commuters who had arrived early to catch the event and their train, KTM gave them a glimpse of its future capability and direction.

Uniformed staff manned the spruced-up train which arrived bearing KTM Bhd's new logo, derived from the old keris-shaped one.

It was later boarded by Dr Mahathir and VIPs including Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik, his deputy Datin Paduka Zaleha Ismail, KTM Bhd chairman Tan Sri C. Selvarajah and its general manager Datuk Abdul Rahim Osman for a closer look.