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Mahathir

KL TO HAVE FOUR MODES OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION, SAYS PM

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KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 11, 1993 (Bernama) -- The federal capital will have four modes of public transportation to ease worsening city traffic congestion, the Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

They are the Sub-Urban Railway, the Light Rapid Transit, the Monorail service and a commuter bus service run by a single company.

Dr Mahathir, who is chairman of the Kuala Lumpur Infrastructural Development Committee, however did not specify the time frame for the implementation of the services.

+It's about time that city dwellers accept the fact that they should leave their cars somewhere and then use public transport to move about in the city,+ he told reporters after opening the New Klang Valley Expressway at the Jalan Duta toll plaza here.

Dr Mahathir said construction of double tracks for the sub-urban railway had already begun and should be ready this year.

When completed, the project would link Kuala Lumpur to Rawang, Seremban and Port Klang. -- more

11/01/12-15MST

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Mahathir 2 Kuala Lumpur

He said the sub-urban railway would ferry commuters from the outskirts to Kuala Lumpur to continue their journey to offices or other destinations in the city by using the Light Rapid Transit (LRT).

However, he said, the double track project could not possibly be completed this year because of problems of resettling squatters away from affected alignments and construction of overhead crossings.

+The cost of squatter resettlement had soared two-fold or three times over initial estimates because the government had to build homes for them,+ he said.

Dr Mahathir said work on the LRT project would start this year following the signing of the contract agreement for its construction last year.

Kuala Lumpur should have had its LRT system long ago but the government had to defer its implementation since no company seemed willing to foot the high costs in return for rather cheap fares allowed by the authorities, he said. -- more

▼11/01/13-06MST

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Dr Mahathir said past feasibility studies showed that companies undertaking the project were bound to suffer losses if low fares were levied upon.

Nonetheless the government had to proceed with the project because further delay would only escalate the costs, he said.

Even as it was now, the costs had already soared to over five times the original estimates calculated when the project was first proposed.

When asked whether the LRT fares would be fixed high, Dr Mahathir said commuters might regard them as such but in reality the fares would still be low as the operating company enjoyed government subsidy.

On city bus service, Dr Mahathir said the government was looking for ways to amalgamate all the bus companies in Kuala Lumpur to be under one single concern.

He said there were now too many bus companies running city commuter services resulting in them covering overlapping routes and making the traffic congestion worse.-- more

▼11/01/14-18MST

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Mahathir 4 Kuala Lumpur

Dr Mahathir said studies showed that most of the buses entering the city were from non-urban areas.

By allowing in too many buses from non-urban areas, there would be no end to city traffic congestion, the Prime Minister said.

It was because of this that the government had to allow only one bus company to operate in the city, he said.

On the monorail system, he said it would serve as a trans-city transportation complementing that of the LRT.

Dr Mahathir however did not disclose when the monorail project would begin.-- more

▼11/01/14-38MST

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Mahathir 5 Kuala Lumpur

Dr Mahathir said the toll imposed by Projek Lebuhraya Utara-Selatan (PLUS) for the use of the north-south highway was still lower than the rates charged in developed countries.

For example, he said, the toll for using the six-lane dual carriageway New Klang Valley Expressway is only half the rate imposed for the use of similar highways in Britain and the United States.

The government could not stop PLUS from increasing the toll if and when necessary because of the still low usage of highways in the country, he said.

Cheaper toll would only make the company run at a loss, he said.

In his speech Dr Mahathir said that the government could still build and maintain highways by charging higher road tax and more for petrol but doing that would be unfair to non-highway users.

+By having a system where vehicle-owners pay toll only for the use of the highways, the burden of building and maintaining highways would only be borne by those using them,+ he said.-- more

▼11/01/15-03MST

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Mahathir 6 (last) Kuala Lumpur

Toll-paying highway users should realise that what they paid for was for their own and the nation's good.

+It's up to the users to make a comparison between petrol and car repair costs and the time gained and comfort derived from using tolled highways,+ he said.

Moreover, he said, the income tax paid by the company operating the highway would be ploughed back to the community through the financing of other government-run public amenities. -- Bernama

▼11/01/15-10MST