

# TRANSPORT PLAN GOES TOP GEAR

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## Work on KL system to be speeded up

By WONG CHUN WAI

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The Government will speed up the implementation of a four-mode transportation system here to ease the city's worsening traffic congestion.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday that the four modes were the suburban railway, the light rail rapid transit system, the monorail service and a commuter bus service to be run by a single company.

The Prime Minister said the federal capital should have had the LRT system a long time ago but its implementation had to be deferred because of its high cost.

"No private company was willing to run the system although the Government was prepared to provide subsidies. The Government was prepared to provide land at a low premium in return for cheap fares for commuters," he said.

He was speaking to newsmen after opening the Bukit Lanjan-Jalan Duta stretch of the New Klang Valley Expressway.

He said feasibility studies had shown that companies undertaking the LRT project would suffer losses if low fares

were levied.

But if the LRT was not implemented, the traffic congestion would continue, and further delays would escalate the costs, added Dr Mahathir, who heads the Kuala Lumpur Infrastructural Development Committee.

"As it is now, the costs have already soared five times the original estimates," he said.

Work on the LRT project would start this year following the signing of the contract for its construction last year.

The Prime Minister said the construction of double tracks for the suburban railway linking Kuala Lumpur to Rawang, Seremban and Port Klang had begun and should be ready this year.

He said the suburban railway would ferry commuters from the outskirts to the city from where they could use the LRT to reach their destination.

Dr Mahathir said the double tracks project had been held up by problems over the resettlement of squatters and the costs had gone up two to three times because the Government had to build houses for them.

"It's about time that city dwellers accept the fact that in a big city like Kuala Lumpur, they can no longer drive their

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# Dr M: Use public transport

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car straight to the office or to the front of a shop. It's not possible anymore," he said.

"The people should learn to leave their car somewhere and then use public transport to move about the city."

On the city bus services, Dr Mahathir said the Government was looking for ways to bring all

the bus firms under one company as there were too many operators, resulting in overlapping routes and traffic congestion.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir said the toll imposed by Projek Lebuh raya Utara-Selatan (PLUS) was still lower than the rates charged by many developed countries.

Although the rates were only half those imposed in

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United States and Britain, the standard of the roads was similar.

The Government could not stop PLUS from increasing the toll because of the low volume of vehicles on the highways, he added.

Dr Mahathir said it was up to motorists to calculate the costs in petrol and repairs besides the time saved and comfort by using tolled highways.