

CNS6730

U GE 13-06 00185 EA270

aae tbe

Mahathir-Train

ELECTRIC EXPRESS TRAIN FROM BUKIT KAYU HITAM TO SINGAPORE

bm

MELAKA, June 13 (Bernama) -- Malaysia plans to have an electric train service from Bukit Kayu Hitam to Singapore to provide rapid transportation to the people, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

A decision has been made by the government to conduct a feasibility study which several countries, including France, have offered to undertake, he added.

The plan was a follow up to the introduction of electric train services between Seremban and Rawang via Kuala Lumpur and between Kuala Lumpur and Port Klang under the ongoing double-tracking project, he told reporters after opening the Ornassteel Corporation steel mill in Air Keroh, here.

Dr Mahathir said in order to enable the electric train project to be implemented, the government felt there was a need to straighten and realign the railway tracks to enable the trains to run faster.

The study was expected to begin within six months to a year, he added.

-- more

AFY LDB

13/06/15-52MST

U GE 13-06 00181 EA271

aae tbe

Mahathir-Train 2 Melaka

"The foreign parties have just made offers, but the government has already decided to conduct the study... even if there are no offers we will go ahead," he said.

He added that the government had yet to identify who would invest in the electric train project but there were two possibilities.

"Now, we leave it to Keretapi Tanah Melayu Berhad (KTM), possibly the investment will be made by KTM... it is also possible the government will make the investment and then offer to transfer it to KTM... it depends," he said.

Asked why the government wanted to introduce the service, Dr Mahathir said the government felt that trains were the most efficient means of transportation in developed countries, like Japan, and in developing countries, like India.

"Malaysia's population is growing, the people are becoming more affluent and they desire whatever facilities there are... sometimes they travel by car, sometimes they fly and sometimes they use the train," he added. -- more

AFY LDB

13/06/16-14MST

U GE 13-06 00210 EA275

aae tbe

Mahathir-train 3 Melaka

Dr Mahathir said in Japan and countries in Europe, the people had a choice whether to travel by road, air or rail.

He had yet to set the target when the electric train service could be introduced but he expected the project to take more time than it took to build a highway.

Dr Mahathir had made a passing reference to plans to introduce the electric train project when he officiated the ground breaking ceremony for the "Composite Technology City" in Batu Berendam this morning.

The subject cropped up when he replied to a request by Melaka Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Tamby Chik that the federal government expand Batu Berendam airport in line with its development as a centre for aerospace industries.

Jokingly, he said there was no need for expansion of the airport because it was faster to travel by road then to fly to Melaka.

The Composite Technology City is being developed in stages on a 200-hectare site. Phase 1 would be construction of a plant to produce composite material and components for Eagle Aircraft Malaysia Sdn.Bhd., now based in Perth, Western Australia. -- more

AFY LDB

▼13/06/16-54MST

U GE 13-06 00208 EA276

aae tbe

Mahathir-train 4 (last) Melaka

An assembly plant for the Eagle light aircraft would be built under the second phase.

The project is being undertaken by Composites Technology Development Corporation (CTDC) whose chairman is Tan Sri Dr Omar Abdul Rahman. CTDC is a joint venture between Composites Technology Research (M) Sdn.Bhd. (CTRM), owned by the Finance Minister Incorporated, and Ikhlas Perdana, owned by FACB Bhd.

CTRM holds 30 per cent equity in CTDC and Iklas Perdana the rest.

Dr Mahathir said it was not Malaysia's intention to compete in the aircraft manufacturing industry as production of the Eagle light aircraft was sufficient for a small country.

"We do not intend to build the B747, so no one should be concerned about this," he added, amidst laughter.

What Malaysia desired was to obtain composite technology and aircraft manufacturing skills for its people to achieve developed nation status by the year 2020, he said.

By having high technology industries, Malaysia would be able to enhance the level of its industrial performance.

"Vision 2020 is not a pipe dream, we have achieved much success... it can become reality," he said. -- Bernama

AFY LDB