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PM LAUNCHES TUNNEL CONSTRUCTION FOR LRT SYSTEM

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 6 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today launched the construction of the first tunnel of the second light rail transit (LRT) system in the city at the Projek Usahasama Transit Ringan Automatik Sdn Bhd (Putra) Sultan Ismail Station site here.

The building of the 4.4 km tunnel which runs through the city centre, from Central Market to Jalan Ampang, will see the use of tunnel boring machines for construction in Malaysia for the first time.

The tunnel will link five underground stations in the second light rail transit (LRT) system in the city -- Benteng, Sultan Ismail, Kampung Baru, KLCC and Ampang Park.

The five are part of the 24 stations in the LRT System 2 which links Gombak and Lembah Subang covering a distance of 29 km. It is scheduled for completion in 1999.

The tunnel boring machines are designed to excavate and construct the tunnel lining simultaneously with an expected progress rate of about 10 metres per day.

Tunnelling work will be carried out within a work shaft about 18m below the ground and the construction is expected to be completed by mid-1997.

The contractors working with Putra for the tunnel construction are Hazama Corporation of Japan and Hyundai-PATI Consortium of South Korea. -- Bernama