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Deal with 3 Japan firms signed

Hardev Kaur in Tokyo

TOKYO, Wed: Public transport in Kuala Lumpur will be further improved with the completion of the "monumental" monorail project which has the makings of a "national symbol".

Known as the People-Mover Rapid Transit (PRT) system, it will be integrated with the other urban transportation systems - STAR, PUTRA, KTM Komuter at KL Sentral Station and the rail system serving the Kuala Lumpur International Airport - for Kuala Lumpur by the year 2000.

To facilitate this, an agreement between KL PRT Sdn Bhd of Malaysia and Itochu Corp and Toyo Engineering Corp in association with Hitachi Corp was signed here today.

The 36 billion yen (100 yen = RM2.04) agreement is for the supply of the monorail system, equipment and services.

Speaking before the signing, Mr Takashi Yamamura, executive vice-president of Itochu, said he firmly believes the partnership forged with PRT will "result in transfer of technology and broaden skills and help Malaysia to progress rapidly".

On the monorail system he said it will be one of the most modern transportation systems which will be a "national symbol of Malaysia".

KL PRT is a 51 per cent Bumiputera-owned company incorporated in Malaysia.

Its shareholders are KL LinerCity Sdn Bhd which holds 63 per cent equity and KL Monorail Concessionaire Sdn Bhd, the remaining 37 per cent.

KL PRT, with an authorised capital of RM600 million, is undertaking the construction of the elevated inner city monorail system costing RM1.9 billion.

The company signed a privatization agreement last October with the Government to construct, operate and maintain the PRT system for a concession period of 30 years.

It will retain all income collected from the provision of services and facilities during the concession period.

The monorail system or the PRT system will provide intra-city public transportation to the central business, hotel and shopping district of Kuala Lumpur and the Old Klang Road in the Federal Territory.

It will stretch 16km from the Jalan Tun Razak bus terminal to Kampung Pasir, Jalan Klang Lama.

According to a statement issued at the signing, which was witnessed by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, the PRT system is based on the latest version of the Tokyo Monorail Series 1000 train, technically enhanced and improved to suit local requirements.

The train will be designed and supplied by Hitachi Ltd. Toyo Engineering will be responsible for the installation while operation and maintenance will be carried out by Itochu Corp in association with Tokyo Monorail Co Ltd and Hitachi Ltd.

The PRT, a straddle monorail, will be manufactured using non-toxic materials in accordance with international standards and is highly fire resistant.

The system is designed for semi-automatic operations with full safe anti-train collision protection.

To be developed in two stages, the first section, 8km long, is scheduled for completion by the end of 1998 and section two, another 8km, by the end of 1999.

A round trip on the full system will take 85 minutes, while a round trip on the first section will take 37 minutes.

Twenty-one fully-elevated stations will be built along the route with a distance of about 600 to 700m between each other. All stations will be designed and built to present a clean, pleasing and aesthetic environment.

Security, automatic fare collection system, telephones and facilities for the disabled will be provided at the stations.

The PRT system is designed to handle up to 18,000 passengers per hour per direction with 630 passengers per train.

Each monorail train will comprise four permanently coupled cars with 168 seats in each car.

Chairman of KL PRT Datuk Kamaruddin Jaffar and its director Tan Sri Vincent Tan signed on behalf of the Malaysian company while the Japanese were represented by Yamamura, Mr Morio Sonodo, president and chief operating officer of Toyo Engineering and Mr Kunio Hamada, senior executive managing director of Hitachi Ltd.

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