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RM128m Genting Skyway ready

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GENTING HIGHLANDS, Thurs. - Genting Skyway, the longest cable car system in Southeast Asia measuring 3.38 kilometres from Gohtong Jaya to the new Highlands Hotel, will be open to the public on Feb 1.

The rides will be free of charge until March 30, after which RM2 will be charged for a one-way trip.

The main objective of the new skyway, able to transport 2,000 passengers per hour, is to ease traffic congestion to and from the resort, especially by tour and chartered buses and public coaches.

Resorts World Berhad senior vice-president Rosli Kamili said today that they hoped to stop buses from going to the resort in about three months.

"We are still talking to tour operators. After Chinese New Year we hope that at least 80 to 90 per cent of the buses will stop going to the resort and to stop completely by the end of March," he said.

The cable car ride takes 10 to 12 minutes up a vertical height of 827 metres compared to a bus ride of 25 to 35 minutes.

The skyway has 100 cabins, or gondolas, manufactured by Leitner SPA of Italy. Each cabin seats eight people. Eighty of the gondolas will be online and 20 at the station.

The main station at the foothill of Gohtong Jaya will allow guests of the resort's hotel to check in and leave their baggage before getting on board the cable cars.

Rosli added that the bags will either be brought to the resort by a special container via the skyway or special containers on lorries.

They have also provided a 10-floor carpark able to accommodate 895 cars, 150 taxis and 20 buses.

What makes the ride to the top more interesting for guests is the scenic route showing off the hill's flora and fauna.

Rosli said they had allocated more than RM3 million for landscaping this year and will use it to beautify the Ulu Kali mountain range.

"We will add more temperate flora nearer the top and plant more creepers at visible concrete areas."

The resort's executive vice-president of public affairs and human resources, Tan Sri Alwi Jantan, said the project, completed in a year, was first conceived by its chairman Tan Sri Lim Goh Tong.

"He saw the need for a modern and hi-tech mode of transportation to the peak of Genting Highlands, one that is easily accessible, convenient and practical.

"The Genting Highlands Resort built the Genting Skyway at a cost of RM128 million, and in so doing, took every step to ensure the complete safety of the system and network."

The skyway, which is the fastest and most advanced mono cable car ride in the world, uses the detachable circulating ropeway system that complies with Swiss safety regulations.

The skyway is electrically powered. It is also equipped with rescue equipment, cable-to-station communication and on the ground rescue tracks.

Executive vice-president of resort operations Justin Tan said no details were spared to ensure the system's complete safety.

The foundation used for the pylons is termed "hand-dug Caisson", with each pylon founded on four caissons measuring 1.2 metres in diameter, socketted down to the bedrock.

The average depth of the caisson is about 40 metres and each group of

four caisson piles can take a vertical load of 4,000 tonnes against a vertical load of 150 tonnes from the cable car system.

"The caisson method is about the safest and strongest foundation in existence, designed specifically for hilly terrain," Tan said.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will officiate the Genting Skyway on Feb 21. He will also be witnessing the handing over of the Genting Highlands fire station to the Government.

Alwi said the entry of other developers in the area over the last few years had made them realise that fire-fighting services should be provided.

He said they had donated two fire engines worth RM8 million to the Government.

The Prime Minister on Feb 21 will also officially open the Highlands Hotel situated 2,000m above sea level.

It is the fifth hotel to be built on Genting Highlands. It has 888 rooms, comprising standard deluxe rooms, suites and penthouses for selected guests, and a bowling alley.

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