

11 JUL 1998

Mahathir-LRT

PM OFFICIALLY LAUNCHES NATION'S FIRST LRT SYSTEM

KUALA LUMPUR, July 11 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today officially launched the STAR Light Rail Transit (LRT) system, which forms System 1 of the Klang Valley integrated LRT system.

The launch took place at the Sukan Negara Station in the Bukit Jalil Sports Complex here.

System 1 is run by Sistem Transit Aliran Ringan Sdn Bhd (STAR), which started operations on Dec 16, 1996. Since its start, STAR has carried a 30 million commuters.

Phase One of the STAR-LRT System I covers a 12 km stretch between Ampang Station and Jalan Sultan Ismail Station and is served by 13 stations along the route.

Phase Two is a 15 km extension of Phase I, comprising two sections -- A and B. Section A is an 11.8 km southern extension from the Chan Sow Lin Station to Komanwel Station while Section B is a 3.2 km northern extension from Sultan Ismail Station to Sentul Timur Station.

Dr Mahathir also drove an LRT train to the official opening of the National Sports Complex in Bukit Jalil tonight.

Dr Mahathir, together with Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik left for Sukan Negara Station from the Sultan Ismail Station at around 8.20 p.m.

Upon reaching the Sungai Besi Station, which is the last station before the Sukan Negara Station, Dr Mahathir took over the driver's seat for the rest of 24-minute journey.

After having officially opened the STAR-LRT's network at the Sukan Negara Station at about 8.50 p.m., Dr Mahathir left to launch the natural gas vehicle (NGV) taxi developed by Petroliam Nasional Bhd (PETRONAS) known as "Enviro 2000".

Dr Mahathir then witnessed the handover of the taxi by PETRONAS's chairman, Tan Sri Azizan Zainul Abidin to SUKOM Ninety Eight Bhd's chairman Gen (R) Tan Sri Hashim Mohd Ali.

As part of its contribution to the Kuala Lumpur 98 XVI Commonwealth Games, PETRONAS is sponsoring 400 NGV taxis for SUKOM's use during the Games.

Dr Mahathir was then driven in one of the taxis to the National Sports Complex.

At the launch of the STAR-LRT system earlier STAR's chairman, Tan Sri Sallehuddin Mohamed, said the company succeeded in completing the project within the targeted period of 30 months and budget of RM3.5 billion.

STAR planned to bring forward the completion date of Section B from Sultan Ismail Station to Sentul Timur Station to Sept 30, 1998 from the earlier targeted date of Dec 31, he added.

The STAR LRT system is the main high volume public transportation to the Commonwealth Games Village. It is capable of carrying 24,000 passengers per hour to Bukit Jalil.

Overall, the system is capable of carrying 33,000 passengers per hour in one direction with the frequencies of one train in every two minutes.

Company officials said a survey undertaken on behalf of STAR-LRT recently showed that 98 percent of STAR's commuters were satisfied with its service and agreed on the reliability, predictability and convenience of the mode of transport. -- BERNAMA

MK MSL SHY