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Twin LRT tunnels to be completed in April

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WORK on the 4.4km twin tunnels for the Putra-LRT system is 85 per cent complete with completion expected in two months' time.

Work is being carried out on some 20 metres underground mostly under the Sungai Klang without disturbance to traffic.

Tunnelling work, officially launched by Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in February 1996, will cover five underground stations - Benteng, Jalan Sultan Ismail, Kampung Baru, KLCC and Ampang Park.

The project is equally shouldered by two contractors - Hazama Corporation of Japan and the Hyundai-Pati Consortium from South Korea.

Hazama's area covers the Benteng, Jalan Sultan Ismail and Kampung Baru stations while work on the Ampang Park, KLCC and Kampung Baru stations is being carried out by the Hyundai-Pati Consortium.

A Putra-LRT spokesman said Hazama had three sets of tunnelling equipment which arrived by ship from Japan in December 1995 in fully assembled form.

Tunnelling work began with the Jalan Sultan Ismail Station, moving towards the Benteng and Kampung Baru stations.

Hundyai-Pati's machinery from Scotland is similar to that used to construct the undersea Eurotunnel linking Britain and France.

The Hazama tunnelling machines have proven themselves in the construction of the underseas tunnel connecting the Honshu and Hokkaido islands.

The spokesman said the tunnel boring machines has been designed to excavate and construct the tunnel lining simultaneously.

The RM4.35 billion project is undertaken by Projek Usahasama Transit Ringan Automatik (Putra) which has a concession agreement with the Government to build, operate and own the system for 60 years.

It will run for 29km linking People's Park, Kelana Jaya, in the west with Taman Melati, Gombak, in the east through Kuala Lumpur's busy and traffic jam-proned central business district.

Passing through the ultra modern Kuala Lumpur Sentral stations, the Putra-LRT will connect with other train systems including the KTM Komuter and the Express Rail Link to the new Kuala Lumpur International Airport in Sepang.

Section 1 of the project stretching 14.1km from the Lembah Subang depot station to the Pasar Seni station is scheduled to be operational in time for the 16th Commonwealth Games between Sept 11 and 21 this year.

Section 2 will stretch 14.9km from the Pasar Seni station to Gombak, and will be ready by next year.

The other system, the STAR-LRT, that began operations on Dec 16, 1996, covers 13 stations in the 12km stretch from Ampang to Jalan Sultan Ismail.

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