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All systems go for KL Sentral

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MALAYSIA'S latest pride, the KL Sentral Station is right on track and all geared up for its launch to service travellers in the country.

KL Sentral Sdn Bhd executive chairman Datuk Seri Abdul Rahman Maidin said the transportation hub will be officially launched as soon as a confirmation date is fixed by the Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"At present, the station is now fully operational and open for public access," he told Business Times in Shah Alam, Selangor yesterday.

Abdul Rahman who is also the president of Malaysian Resources Corp Bhd (MRCB) said the station was completed in early November last year, ahead of its December 31 deadline.

"Even though the project's development was affected by the regional currency crisis in 1997, its progress has over-taken the delay since it restarted.

It was completed ahead of schedule," he said.

The KL Sentral Station is part of the KL Sentral communication and transportation hub located on a 28.8 ha plot of land in Brickfields that was once the former KTM marshalling yard opposite the National Museum in Jalan Travers.

It is a commuters' dream and is expected to be the hub of an integrated network of rail transportation providing facilities to five railway systems.

It is located at 1.5km from the South-West edge of the central business district of Kuala Lumpur.

The KL Sentral Station comprises 28 tracks, 12 train platforms to serve 140,000 million passengers daily by 2001 or 50 million annually and 100 million passengers a year by 2020.

Phase One (2000-2004) of the project comprises the KL Sentral Station and Plaza Sentral (strata offices) and retail complexes.

Phase 2 (2005-2010) of the project comprises office blocks to four and five star hotels, Arena Sentral, sports and event centres as well as service apartments with a combined area of 19 million sq ft by 2010 of gross floor and 14 freehold land parcels.

It costs RM1.2 billion to build with a total area of 3.7ha apart from a 4.2 ha depot.

Dubbed as Virtual City Airport as well as an International City, KL Sentral integrates four rail networks, namely KTM Intercity, KTM Kommuter, Putra Light Rail Transit and the Express Rail Link (ERL).

The ERL linking Kuala Lumpur to the KLIA consists of KLIA Express and KLIA Transit.

KLIA Express, scheduled to be completed in 2002, is equipped with state of the art facilities complete with check-in and check out facilities with a travelling time of 28 minutes.

KLIA Transit will provide travelling options to the administrative centre of Putrajaya and also KLIA.

The Downtown Elevated Monorail People Mover Rapid Transit rail service is also expected to link up with the KL Sentral later on with its main station located in Brickfields.

It also links up with the KTM Intercity trains which plies Singapore and Bangkok.

In a later phase it will link up with the proposed trans-Asian rail

network to Kuming in China.

Abdul Rahman also said 73 per cent of the 400 unit Suasana luxury condominiums and 75 per cent of office blocks have been sold respectively.

"One of the office blocks has been bought by Lembaga Tabung Haji."

The KL Sentral project is expected to create impetus for economic activities to nearby areas including Brickfields.

It is 64.28 per cent owned by MRCB, 26.10 per cent by KTM Bhd and 9.62 per cent by Pembinaan Redzai Sdn Bhd.

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