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Work on ERL progressing well

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KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - Work on the RM2.4 billion Express Rail Link project connecting the capital city with the Kuala Lumpur International Airport in Sepang, is 72.1 per cent complete.

Express Rail Link Sdn Bhd chief executive officer Dr Aminuddin Adnan said as at April 20, the civil and system works were 78 per cent and 66.4 per cent completed.

He said work on the Kuala Lumpur Sentral Station in Brickfields was 94.9 per cent completed, and ERL will begin running on April 19 next year.

He said 42km of the tracks had been laid and they are currently carrying out work at the Seri Kembangan site.

"There is another 15km in distance to be completed before reaching KL Sentral," he told the New Straits Times.

The 57km track will run parallel to the existing Keretapi Tanah Melayu track for the first 17km from KL Sentral, and then will leave the KTM corridor and run along its own alignment after Serdang Lama.

As for the stations, Aminuddin said construction work on two of its three intermediate stations - Bandar Tasik Selatan and Salak Tinggi - were on schedule at 50 and 60 per cent completed respectively.

"Works on the Putrajaya station, also known as Western Transport Terminal carried out by SYZ Consortium is two weeks behind schedule," he said.

Speaking on ERL services, he said they offered two types of services - Ekspres KLIA and Komuter KLIA. Ekspres KLIA is a non-stop, high speed rail service between KLIA and KL Sentral, departing every 15 minutes from both terminals. The train can take 156 passengers at one time and the journey is 28 minutes.

This will be operational in April next year.

Komuter KLIA transits at three stations that are Bandar Tasik Selatan, Putrajaya and Salak Tinggi before reaching KLIA and KL Sentral, departing every 30 minutes from both terminals. Passenger capacity is 540.

The journey takes 36 minutes and it is expected to be operational in June next year.

The first ERL train is being launched tomorrow in Vienna by its contractor Siemens. Aminuddin said a similar train will be brought to Malaysia through Port Klang in October.

"We will have a three-month trial run from November to January without passengers to test out its system integration as well as commissioning," he said.

He said they will later carry out a one-month trial operation with passengers on board. The public is welcome for a trial ride and give feedback on its services.

Aminuddin said the names for both rail services was selected by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"Earlier, we held a contest. Fifty entries were received and we narrowed it down to three names. And it was decided that the word KLIA has to be part of it," he said.

He said KLIA is well known throughout the world just like Airport Express in Hong Kong, Heathrow Airport in London, Flytoget in Oslo and Arlanda Express in Stockholm.

"The name is as common as taxi service. This way, we do not need to do much marketing."

