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ERL - A fast, joyful way of travelling

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THE ride on the high-speed KLIA Express from KL Sentral to the KL International Airport (KLIA) is not only fast but it also offers a scenic view of the city and its outskirts.

The train, which carries 156 seated passengers, departs from KL City Air Terminal (KL CAT) located within KL Sentral with a moderate speed as it passes through the city area.

It will then pick up its momentum to the allowable speed of 160kph after leaving the city area.

At certain corners, the fully-trained driver sounds the horn and at some parts of the track which runs through the densely populated area, the driver reduces the speed.

Yesterday, a group of journalists was taken on the electric-powered KLIA Express ride to the KLIA and then back to KL CAT.

Among those on the train, were the staff of Express Rail Link Sdn Bhd (ERLSB) and Malaysia Airlines. ERLSB is the concessionaire of the high-speed rail system.

According to KLIA Express special supervisor, Nasharuddin Aziz, who was driving the train, the train would continue running even during power disruption as there is a back-up power.

Therefore, air passengers should not worry about missing their flights during power failure.

The one-driver train with four railcars cruises smoothly on the 57.6km double track.

The exterior of the sleek-looking train has unique designs, combining hibiscus, corals and fish, flora and fauna and batik motifs.

The train, which is manufactured by German technology powerhouse, Siemens AG, has four flip-seats for handicapped in the train.

Besides secured containerised baggage compartment for check-in and check-out baggage, it also has three-tier luggage racks for heavy items, overhead racks for light items and sunshade at each window.

After checking in at KL CAT, passengers can either sleep or enjoy the pleasant view during the 28-minute ride to the airport.

For executives and business travellers who want to continue with their paperwork or use their laptop computer can do so as there is ample space between seats in the train and passengers are assured of non-bumpy ride.

As the train leaves KL Sentral, passengers will be greeted by the city's high-rise buildings, apartments and shopping complex.

And as it moves out of the Kuala Lumpur skyline, passengers are met a mix of greenery and buildings - residential and shophouses.

After passing through Universiti Putra Malaysia's new campus, boarders can see more of the soothing greenery, interspersed with a couple of small blue lakes.

The ride moves smoothly and soon passengers will see some parts of Putrajaya, the Government administrative centre, before a green scenery takes over with a long stretch of oil palm plantations lining both sides of the rail track.

As the train approaches KLIA, passengers can have a peek at the upper part of the Sepang Formula One Circuit.

As the train nears the airport, the KLIA's control tower becomes visible, indicating that the passengers' are approaching their final destination.

Once the train arrives at the KLIA terminal, passengers, who have already checked-in at the KL CAT, can go directly to the airport's departure hall or they can visit the duty-free shops at the airport if they need to do extra shopping on top of the shopping done at the KL Sentral and KL CAT. There are many retail outlets offering souvenirs as well as up-market goods.

KLIA Express will start its commercial operation on April 19, following its official launching by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on April 13.

The train will run every 15 minutes and will be operational from 5am till 1am.

The one-way fare will be RM35 and no reservations are necessary.

ERLSB is offering a free-ride for the public between April 1 and 10. During the period, those who are interested for the free ride, can make online application through the company's website, www.myERL.com

However, those with valid airline tickets can use KLIA Express service without prior online registration with ERLSB.

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