

12 JAN 2002  
Mahathir-Railway  
PM GIVE THUMBS-UP FOR KLIA EXPRESS

SEPANG, Jan 12 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has given the thumbs up for the Express Rail Link (ERL) which connects KL Sentral and the KL International Airport (KLIA).

"I think it's very good because we actually beat the scheduled time. Instead of 28 minute as advertised, we completed the journey in 25 minutes.

"I believe it can go faster if we have lines which more straight," the prime minister told reporters after going on a test run on the ERL from KL Sentral to the KLIA, here, today.

Asked if anything needed to be improved on the ERL, he said: "I dont know, it is fine as far as I can see. They can go ahead."

The trial run for the ERL, dubbed the KLIA Express, began this month and will continue until April. Free service will be conducted for two weeks in April before the revenue service begins on April 19.

The ERL will be doing continuous high-speed test runs with the KLIA Express trains throughout the whole alignment of 57km next week.

To date, the ERL has received eight such trains and all are expected to do test runs along the track from KL Sentral to KLIA at intervals of less than 15 minutes.

The KLIA Express trains will be running full speed at 160km per hour in certian areas and are extremely quiet.

Asked on grouses that charges of RM35 per trip on the ERL were high, Dr Mahathir said he did not think that the charges were high at all.

"Malaysians want the best of everything at no price at all, free but you can't get that. If you want something you have to pay for it, I think it is very cheap," he said.

He said the KLIA Express was one of the cheapest services in the world for travel per kilometre for city-to-airport rail service.

On the Israeli attack on the Gaza Strip Airport, the Prime Minister said Malaysia could only protest the action of Isreal but could not do much to stop the attack.

"The problem is that as long as those in power don't take action... we have to just see," he added.

Asked if the United Nations should take action against Israel, he said: "Well, it's like that more or less." he said.

-- BERNAMA

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