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Malaysia to keep pursuing engineering successes

Koh Lay Chin

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today Malaysia would continue to pursue engineering successes like the KL Monorail, with other Malaysian-made transportation systems possibly in the pipeline.

He said although Malaysia was new in the business of transport systems, advances in engineering after the production of the national car showed that it had achieved much progress.

"Now we can export our engineering expertise and if our memorandums of understanding (with other countries) come to fruit, I am sure we'll be exporting more expertise and knowledge in intra-city transport systems," he said, adding that Malaysia had now joined the elite few that could design, manufacture and build its own rapid transport system. He was speaking at the launch of the KL Monorail at its Bukit Bintang station.

"We are not going to stop just there, we may start building trains and high-speed trains."

He said Malaysians should be proud of the KL Monorail, which had been certified as technologically-perfect for use as a public transport system.

The system was suitable for the city centre, he said, because underground trains would have been five times costlier, and above-ground trains would have been unsightly to the city's skyline.

Dr Mahathir was the first to buy a monorail ticket at its special September rate of RM1. The service was opened to the public at 4pm.

Present were Dr Mahathir's wife Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, Transport Minister Datuk Chan Kong Choy, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor, Deputy Transport Minister Tan Sri Ramli Ngah Talib, Datuk Bandar Datuk Mohamad Shaid Mohd Taufek and operator MTrans Holdings chairman David Chew Keat Soon.

Chan later said at a Press conference that the KL Monorail was a special Merdeka gift to Malaysians, adding that the system would help relieve traffic congestion in the city centre, with 80,000 commuters expected daily.

The KL Monorail stations are at Titiwangsa, Chow Kit, Medan Tuanku, Bukit Nanas, Raja Chulan, Bukit Bintang, Imbi, Hang Tuah, Maharajalela, Tun Sambanthan and KL Sentral.