

# Dr Mahathir: HSR's short distance a waste

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*A high-speed train should be built for longer distance journeys to maximise the amount of travel time that can be saved, says former PM*

by ASILA JALIL

THE proposed revival of the high-speed rail (HSR) would be a waste for the country as the distance from Kuala Lumpur to Singapore is short.

Former Prime Minister (PM) Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said a high-speed train should be built for longer distance journeys to maximise the amount of travel time that can be saved.

"If you want to make a high-speed train popular, you must go a longer distance because if the distance is short, time saved is minimal.

"So, why should people travel on an expensive train when they can travel by car or other trains? A HSR should be for long distance, maybe from Singapore to Penang or Alor Setar or the border of Thailand," he said during a virtual



Commenting on his book, Dr Mahathir says he had written it because someone needs to 'speak up' on the political upheaval that had taken place in the country in the past 2 years

roundtable session for his upcoming book yesterday.

The Parti Pejuang Tanah Air chairman also noted that Malaysians prefer to drive when they travel long distances in the country instead of taking the train.

Thus, the government must consider the country's needs and if the HSR would be fully utilised in the country.

"When you want to do some-

thing, you must weigh the usefulness of what you want to do against the needs of the country.

"If a country does not need it yet, then do not do it. The HSR is going to travel between Singapore and Kuala Lumpur, which is a very short distance. A high-speed train is very costly," he said.

It was reported that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob had proposed the revival

of the Kuala Lumpur-Singapore HSR after the project was shelved and cost the government RM320 million.

Singapore PM Lee Hsien Loong had said the proposed revival was brought up to him by the PM himself during a bilateral meeting at the republic.

Lee also said the republic is open to new proposals on the project.

In March, Malaysia paid RM320.27 million to Singapore for costs incurred for the development of the HSR project, as well as for the extension of its suspension.

The two countries reached an amicable agreement on the amount following a verification process by Malaysia.

The 350km line was supposed to start from Bandar Malaysia to Sepang, Putrajaya, Seremban, Melaka, Muar, Batu Pahat and Iskandar Puteri, before reaching its last destination in Jurong East.

When asked if the project reflects the comeback of corrupted politics in the country, Dr Mahathir said the move indeed alludes to corruption in the political scene.

Separately, Dr Mahathir said the 15th general election will be a cru-

cial election in the country's history as it sets the tone for the administration in the years to come.

He said the country would be continuously led by corrupt individuals if they claim victory in the polls.

"If voters are bribed and they then choose to support those who bribed them, then a bad government will be in place.

"That government will not allow any good government to come up. The next government after that will only be made up of people that the corrupt government allows to go through," he said.

Commenting on his book, Dr Mahathir said he had written it because someone needs to "speak up" on the political upheaval that had taken place in the country in the past two years.

He added that writing the book allowed him to explain what is happening in the country and highlights the need to get rid of corrupt leaders from the administration.

"I hope it will explain to people the things that are happening around them. The governance in the country is somewhat incompetent and corrupt," he added.