

Green light for Penang LRT project

Federal Govt to set aside funds for proposed 22km light rail line

By IMRAN HILMY
imran@thestar.com.my

BUKIT MERTA JAM: A light rail transit (LRT) between George Town and the spread of hi-tech industries in Bayan Lepas looks set to take shape with a strong commitment from the Prime Minister.

Yesterday, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim relayed the good news by announcing that the Federal Government would set aside an allocation for Penang to have its first LRT.

He said the Cabinet had looked into the project carefully with allocations provided under a "big scheme" so that the state government could implement the project as soon as possible.

"I would like to take the opportunity to announce that the government will help to ease the problem of the project by relooking and minimising the scope of reclamation (of the three islands).

"We will allocate the necessary funds so that the state government can expedite the implementation of the LRT," he said in his speech during the Malaysia Madani Hari Raya open house at Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM)



Permatang Pauh near here.

Anwar said in principle, the Transport Minister (Anthony Loke) had agreed with the proposal and met officers from the Finance Ministry to discuss how to find a better method to fund the project.

He said in one or two weeks, federal officials would meet the state government to discuss how

to structure the financial scheme.

The Prime Minister also agreed that traffic congestion in Penang was bad and that it was time for the state to have a new transportation network like in Klang Valley.

The Bayan Lepas LRT project is among the major components in the state's mega infrastructure project, dubbed the Penang Transport Master Plan (PTMP).

Thank you:

Anwar waving to the crowd as he prepares to leave the Malaysia Madani Hari Raya open house at UiTM Permatang Pauh in Bukit Mertajam.
- ZHAFARAN NASIB/The Star

mine the financing method later," he told a press conference.

Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow, in the same press conference, expressed his happiness and described it as "a gift for the people of Penang".

"This is something Penangites have been waiting for," he said.

Earlier, some 20,000 people thronged the open house organised by the Federal Government in conjunction with Hari Raya Aidilfitri.

Anwar, who arrived there at about 12.15pm, was greeted by a sea of well-wishers.

At 12.50pm, Yang di-Pertua Negeri Tun Ahmad Fuzi Abdul Razak arrived with his wife Toh Puan Khadijah Mohd Nor.

Besides Chow and Loke, other federal ministers such as Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, Agriculture and Food Security Minister Datuk Seri Mohamad Sabu and Home Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail were also present.

The Malaysia Madani Hari Raya open house featured 23 booths, offering food and drinks such as satay, ketupat, rendang, nasi impit and others.

The proposed LRT line stretches over 22km, from Komtar to Permatang Damar Laut, with possible extension into three islands to be reclaimed.

Separately, Loke confirmed Anwar's commitment that the Federal Government would fund the LRT project.

"The government will fully fund the project. We will deter-