

Rail travel expansion

The Star - 30/8/2006

RM10b to improve public transport

By MERGAWATI ZULFAKAR
merga@thestar.com.my

PUTRAJAYA: A new light rail transit line linking Kota Damansara and Cheras will be running in four years' time, and the present LRT networks expanded, under a special RM10bil Government allocation for an efficient and cost-effective public transport system in the Klang Valley.

The new line will cover some 30km and cut across Kuala Lumpur.

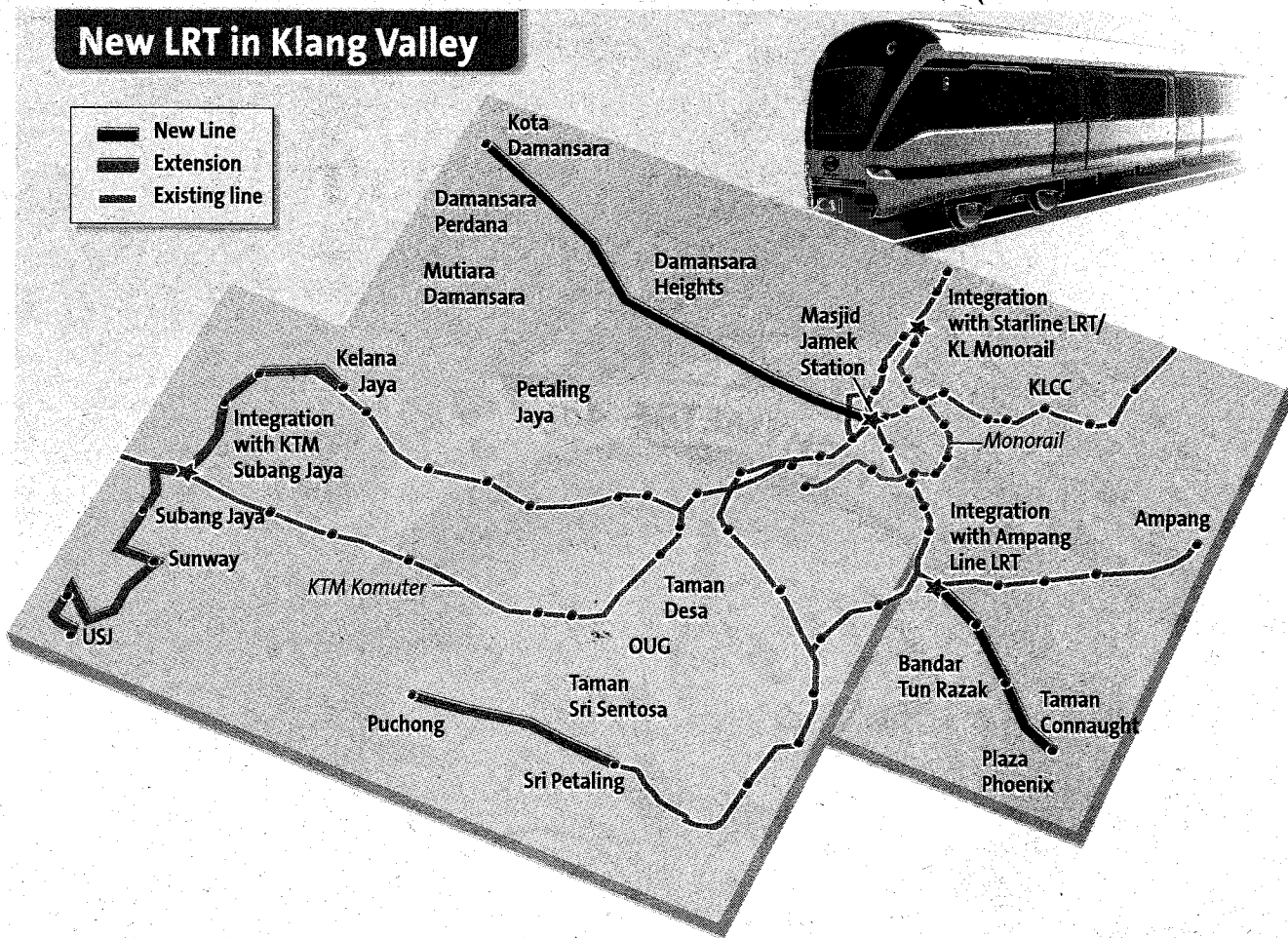
The Kelana Jaya line (formerly Putra LRT) will be extended to Subang Jaya and USJ, while the Sri Petaling line (formerly Star LRT) will cover Puchong.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, who made the announcement, said Syarikat Prasarana Negara Berhad (SPNB) – the holding company under Ministry of Finance Incorporated – had tabled its public transportation plan in the Klang Valley up to 2010.

SPNB owns the rail lines as well as the Cityliner and Intra-kota buses operated by Rapid KL.

"Apart from the new rail line, SPNB will buy train coaches, new buses, develop new infrastructure, set up a new ticketing programme and build integrated transport terminals in Gombak and Bandar Tasik Selatan.

"Rapid KL will get 1,130 buses and repair its present fleet of 600 buses. So by the first quarter of next year, Rapid KL will have more than 1,700 buses



plying bus routes within the Klang Valley," he told newsmen after chairing the first meeting of the Cabinet committee on public transportation.

Also present was Transport Minister Datuk Seri Chan Kong Choy.

To enhance the bus service, SPNB and Rapid KL will provide shuttle services to housing estates within the Klang Valley.

Najib hoped that with all the new elements in place, public transportation in the Klang Valley would be a fully integrated system comprising the LRT, monorail, commuter train, Express Rail Link and buses.

The new and extended LRT

lines and more buses on the road will boost the Government's effort to increase public transport usage in the Klang Valley. The average number of daily passengers for rail-related transport barely reached 450,000 last year.

"The low percentage of city folks using public transport is one of the contributing factors to traffic congestion," the Deputy Prime Minister said, adding that the Government wanted to increase the percentage of public transport passengers from 11% to 40% to be in line with big cities worldwide.

Najib also said that the RM4.4bil the Government was

supposed to have saved when it slashed fuel subsidies, the savings to be channelled to improving public transport, had been wiped out by escalating global fuel prices.

"So this money (RM10bil) is a special allocation because the Government is committed to improving the system," he added.

SPNB chief executive officer Shaipuddin Shah Harun said the cost to build the new line and two extensions was estimated at RM7bil.

However, he said, the company was still studying how best to connect the new line between Kota Damansara and

Cheras to the existing lines and the extensions from Kelana Jaya and USJ and from Sri Petaling to Puchong.

"We are still studying the geographical area where the lines would run, the suitability of each station, the cost and time to construct the project," he added.

He said, for example, there were several options for the line between Kelana Jaya and USJ.

"The study to identify the potential routes started three months ago. We are half way through it. The final report should be completed in October," he added.