

## **REIMAGINING TRANSPORTATION TO SHAPE SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY**

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Seven years ago, in 2010, I introduced our Economic Transformation Programme and Government Transformation Programme which are also collectively known as the National Transformation Programme. This programme was designed to transform Malaysia into a high income nation, and into a more inclusive, equitable and sustainable society. It was my personal view then, as it is now, that an efficient land public transport system was central to this aspiration.

In a larger context, the land public transport agenda is not just about mega infrastructure projects, which, in and of themselves, undoubtedly generate significant economic benefits to the country. Of greater importance is that it is a pathway to higher productivity and better living conditions for Malaysians.

Moreover, in the long run, a reliable, integrated and modern land public transport network will accelerate socio-economic growth, and improve the quality of our environment, all of which are crucial for the sustainable development of Malaysia. It was for these reasons that we made transformation of public transport a key agenda under the National Transformation Programme (NTP) journey.

Anchored upon this ambitious vision, and guided by our principle of “rakyat didahulukan, pencapaian diutamakan” – where we prioritise the timely delivery of the needs of our citizens over everything else, the Land Public Transport Commission or the Suruhanjaya Pengangkutan Awam Darat (SPAD) was established, and placed directly under my purview. I would be remiss not to acknowledge and thank YBhg Tan Sri Syed Hamid Albar as the first and former Chairman of SPAD, who fulfilled my trust in him and helped the government deliver our public transport agenda during his seven years at the helm of SPAD.

In 2013, SPAD formulated the National Land Public Transport Master Plan – a critical policy instrument which established an ambitious target to achieve 40% modal share for land public transport in Greater Kuala Lumpur/Klang Valley by 2030. Following this, the Urban Rail Development Plan which prioritizes rail as the backbone of the entire public transport system swung into action at an unprecedented momentum.

As a result of our relentless pursuit in the last seven years – to modernise MRTour rail network, improve our bus services and institute a future-friendly regulatory framework to accelerate mobility, we can confidently say that our nation has made significant strides in improving connectivity. Take, for example, the completion of the 35km LRT Extension Programmes (LEP) in 2016, which provided commuters in densely populated residential areas of Bandar Kinrara, Puchong, Putra Heights, USJ and Subang Jaya another viable and traffic –free option for mobility.

As a result, the LRT Kelana Jaya Line recorded an increase of 26% (or 271,250) in daily ridership for the period January to August in 2017 compared to 215,855 in 2016. Adding to this growth is the LRT Ampang Line which recorded an increase of 14% which translates to 184,931 average daily ridership for the period of January to August, 2017.

Meanwhile, the 22-year-old KTM commuter system is being turned around with a budget of RM1.41 billion which includes the upgrading of track and signaling systems of the 42km network. Once completed in 2019, Kua a safer, more comfortable system with better service frequency awaits the urban commuter.

In August 2016, our transformation journey advanced another step with the launch of the LRT3 project. This latest urban rail project will connect Bandar Utama to Johan Setia, Klang with a total distance of 37km with 26 stations.

In Sept 2016, I broke the ground for the second Mass Rapid Transit line or MRT2, the Sungai Buloh-Serdang-Putrajaya line. This marked the commencement of work of the MRT line 2 which spans 52.2km covering 37 stations, envisaged to benefit more than 2 million urban dwellers.

We made history with the much anticipated full opening of MRT Line 1 (Sungai Buloh – Kajang) in July this year, providing direct links to the city center from the north-western and the south-eastern sector. MRT Line 1 which spans across a distance of 51km with 31 stations is complemented by 300 MRT feeder buses, connecting commuters to stations and adjacent areas with a fixed fare of RM1.

The MRT project was, from conception to delivery, a priority for me and a project which I personally oversaw every stage of its progress. Apart from wanting the rakyat to experience greater ease of commute in the city, I also did not want Kuala Lumpur to be known internationally more for its traffic woes than anything else, like some other cities in the region. We needed the best solution to alleviate traffic congestion coming into the city centre. Alhamdulillah, the outcome and reception of the MRT Line 1 have been tremendous. The successful completion of the MRT Line 1 proves that we are capable of completing one of the most advanced mass rapid infrastructure projects in the history of this country.

Not only were we able to complete and manage this project efficiently, we were also able to complete it ahead of schedule and RM2 billion below budget. This is by any standards, an outstanding achievement for any country. One of the main factors contributing to this, has been the hard work of thousands of Malaysians employed for the project, who successfully made it a reality.

The MRT Line 1 from Sungai Buloh to Kajang proves that we are committed in realising land public transport projects for the well-being of our people. I have been informed that from July until August we have reached a weekly ridership of over 800,000 passengers, with over 1 million passengers over the holiday week of 27th August to September 3. With a capacity to carry 400,000 passengers a day, we are confident that these numbers will certainly grow as more and more people switch to the MRT for their daily commute. In fact even now, I have been getting reports from many people who say they have experienced reduced traffic congestion since the MRT came on-line. With some 40,000 cars removed from the roads daily according to SPAD estimates, the congestion has been reduced and we hope there will be more of it, as more people switch to public transport over time.

With the landmark success of the MRT Line 1, we can see how land public transport can become a real game-changer in transforming the lifestyle of Malaysians, by reducing traffic congestion and paving the way for green mobility and reduction of carbon emissions in Greater Kuala Lumpur.

Today, SPAD and MRT Corp are carrying out detailed feasibility studies on the MRT Line 3 Alignment, provisionally called the Circle Line covering areas such Bandar Malaysia, Mont Kiara, Sentul, Midvalley and Setiawangsa, and the Government is looking to fast track the construction and completion of this line in phases. Insya-Allah, with all these measures in place, we are on track towards making our cities more liveable and vibrant to live, work and play in.

As you can see, the Greater Kuala Lumpur/ Klang Valley's record of delivering its recent public transport projects on time is a testament to the forward planning process now in place driven by the Government.

Commuters' overall feedback has also been positive, and this can be seen from the 2016 Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI), an independent survey carried out by SPAD which shows that 84% of respondents are satisfied with the urban public transport, an increase of 10% from 2015. These findings reflect that the Government is on the right track in the planning and implementation of initiatives under the National Land Public Transport Master Plan.

Daily average ridership across all rail lines for the period of January – August, 2017 saw a significant 12% pick up from 570,021 to 638,605. To continue to attract more ridership by making transit more seamless, SPAD will soon launch the Journey Planner by year end 2017 and implement the integrated common payment system (ICPS) by 2019.

Beyond Kuala Lumpur and the Klang Valley, the Government seeks to drive modal share increase – with rail services anchoring this transformation as the spine of a comprehensive transport system.

Over the past seven years, more than 700km of double-tracked intercity rail has been put into place, driven by projects such as the double tracking of the Gemas to Padang Besar

stretch on the west coast of Peninsular Malaysia, while the 197km stretch from Gemas to Johor Bahru should be double-tracked over the next few years.

Taking connectivity to even greater speed, will be the Kuala Lumpur- Singapore HSR project. I recently launched the concept designs for the HSR stations, and I am delighted that the designs were met with so much excitement from members of the public. There is a very palpable sense of anticipation among Malaysians of the prospect of travelling to Singapore in just 90 minutes, with immigration clearance done at the beginning of either side of the journey. It will truly transform the way Malaysians and Singaporeans interact with each other and it will certainly generate economic benefits to both countries. I look forward to the commencement of construction next year, after the public inspection period which begins this November 1, and after other necessary steps in the process are duly completed. Meanwhile, in the East Coast, we will build the East Coast Rail Link (ECRL) which will spur a new wave of growth and development by unleashing the hidden potential of the less developed region of the East Coast. It will also cut travel time from west coast to east coast and vice versa to a mere 4 hours.

The ECRL is a high impact project which will be the backbone transport infrastructure for the ECER (East Coast Economic Region). The ECRL will be a catalyst for economic equality between the west and east coast as it will stimulate investment, spur commercial activities, create ample jobs, facilitate quality education and boost tourism in Pahang, Terengganu and Kelantan. I am confident that ECRL will accelerate the transformation of the East Coast region to become more competitive on a par with other economic growth centres.

Elsewhere, this December, we will hit yet another key milestone with the Bilateral Agreement between Malaysia and Singapore for the Johor Bahru-Woodlands Rapid Transit System (RTS) Link project. The 4km RTS system is expected to be completed in 2024 and will connect Bukit Chagar, Johor Bahru in Malaysia and Woodlands North in Singapore where passengers can transfer to Singapore's upcoming Thomson-East Coast MRT Line.

The service is expected to carry up to 10,000 passengers per hour in each direction and will significantly reduce congestion at the border crossing. This cross-border rail project is important as it serves to provide relief to the perpetually congested Causeway, one of the

world's busiest land checkpoints serving not only Malaysians and Singaporeans, but also visitors from other countries.

Significant resources are also being allocated to bridge first- and last-mile connectivity. Since 2012, the Government has invested RM766 million under the Interim Stage Bus Support Fund (ISBSF) to ensure that residents along social routes are still provided with bus services.

Although the ISBSF provides a much needed lifeline to keep social routes running, it is not designed to be a long-term initiative and must be replaced in phases with a more sustainable system. As a result, the Stage Bus Service Transformation (SBST) was introduced in 2015 to increase the viability of operators and service coverage.

Implemented as the myBAS initiative, this service migrates bus operators from a fare box revenue model to a system that holds them to higher standards of service. SPAD will plan the network and pay a 'per vehicle per kilometre rate'. In return the operators are required to deliver on the agreed service level performance to ensure commuters enjoy better service and connectivity.

The Government has invested RM143 million for the operationalisation of myBAS services by SPAD in Kangar since August 2015, in Seremban since January 2016 and in Ipoh since June 2016. To-date, myBAS has recorded more than 8.4 million passengers, (or averaging 324,000 passengers a month in these 3 capital states).

SBST is expected to be implemented in Kuala Terengganu and Johor Bahru by end of this year, and this will be followed by a national roll-out in stages covering all capital cities by 2020. To support the efforts to reduce carbon emissions and promote cleaner environment, SPAD will also carry out a pilot project to introduce electric buses as part of the myBAS initiative, starting with Johor Bahru and Terengganu.

Meanwhile, the BRT will be the public transport infrastructure backbone of Iskandar Malaysia in the next two decades, by providing a reliable, comfortable and cost-effective service. The BRT service is expected to be operational in 2021 covering 90% of Iskandar Malaysia, with a 51km route through 39 stations. In addition, the development of the BRT

system will have smooth links to the Rail Transit System (RTS), High-Speed Rail, KTM Commuter and inter-town bus terminals.

With the expectation of increases in population and economic growth to simultaneously boost job opportunities, I am confident that BRT will become a catalyst to spur Iskandar Malaysia to become more competitive on par with other economic growth centres.

With regard to taxis, the Government unveiled the Taxi Industry Transformation Programme (TITP) to ensure that the welfare of taxi drivers will be looked after, while putting in place a system to regulate the entry of e-hailing into the market, in order to create a level playing field for the benefit of all stakeholders and participants.

Employing an inclusive, holistic approach to solve the long-standing structural issues affecting the taxi industry, the taxi transformation plan by SPAD strives to pave a level playing field for the taxi industry. The eleven (11) programmes under the Taxi Industry Transformation Plan were formulated based on four (4) key principles: improve taxi driver's income and welfare; rationalise taxi fare; improve taxi drivers service quality and conduct; and leverage on technology to enable the taxi industry to innovate and evolve for a sustainable future.

The recent amendments to the Land Public Transport Act 2010 (APAD) which was passed in Parliament in July this year demonstrates the Government's leadership which acknowledges that regulatory systems need to be more responsive to innovation to foster growth. I am confident that these reforms once gazetted, will offer diverse transport options for commuters, and help the taxi industry to progressively evolve towards a more level playing field by leveraging on technology and being responsive to market forces.

All of these public transport initiatives, apart from their obvious benefits to commuters also represent opportunities for our human capital development. Our expanding rail network and related infrastructure projects in particular, present us with an invaluable opportunity to study, develop, and implement state-of-the-art systems for maintenance and operations.

Over the past decade, the Government has invested billions in building and upgrading rail network, in both intercity and Greater Kuala Lumpur/Klang Valley. We have expanded the urban rail network from 279km to the present 369km and this will grow to 505km with the completion of LRT3, MRT2 and MRT 3 Circle Line.

By 2027, when the East Coast Rail Link, the KL-Singapore High Speed Rail, JB-Woodlands (North) RTS and other urban rail lines are completed, rail mileage across the nation will come close to 3,000km, 65% more than the present rail network which is a major infrastructure enhancement.

As a result, in the next decade, the land public transport sector will accelerate the creation of approximately 100,000 technical and high skilled engineering jobs with opportunities in complex, cutting-edge projects, like the Kuala Lumpur-Singapore High Speed Rail (HSR), the East Coast Rail Link, Rapid Transit System – in addition to the skilled talent pool that the KVMRT system is creating today. They will be the backbone of our rail system, and more than that, if we get it right, we may be able to export high quality and high value Malaysian expertise overseas to help build mega infrastructure projects in other countries requiring expert input. These are the added benefits that we stand to gain as we continue to build projects for the rakyat and invest in strengthening our human capital.

Even with the achievements I have mentioned, our work is far from done. We have set a new goal under the 2050 National Transformation plan, to be a top 20 country by the year 2050. Public transport is part and parcel of this goal and going forward, our public transport transformation must remain current and in step with what an informed, internet-savvy population demands.

New technology, disruptive business models and commuters' demand for higher levels of service are transforming the way we plan transportation for our future cities. Driverless vehicles, predictive maintenance for trains, electric cars- who knows what else the future will unveil? What is clear is that people and cities are on the cusp of changing rapidly and dramatically as advancements in mobility technology converge in the marketplace.

Therefore – in Reimagining transportation to shape sustainable mobility, let us be mindful of the rapidly changing technological landscape and the evolving habits and preferences of consumers as we plan for an inclusive and comprehensive public transport system.

I would also like to commend SPAD for its relentless efforts in shaping a world-class land public transport for our nation as well as for its contributions in furthering the national transformational plan. I assure you that the government, and indeed I myself, will continue to make transformation of land public transport in our country a top priority, for the benefit of all Malaysians.

I thank all the LPT stakeholders and operators for their continued commitment and dedication towards greater mobility and connectivity in this country. Let's keep this going and continue to work together to completely transform for the better, land public transport in Malaysia.

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