

STEPPING UP A GEAR TO IMPROVE URBAN PUBLIC TRANSPORT



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As the need for an efficient transport network becomes all the more urgent, the Ministry of Transport as the key driver of the Urban Public Transport (UPT) National Key Results Area (NKRA) is committed to finding solutions to a host of issues encountered by regular users of public transportation. **Malaysian Business** speaks to Dato' Seri Kong

Cho Ha, Minister of Transport, on ways to further improve public transportation in urban centres.

Q: In a nutshell, what is the Government's aspiration towards improving Malaysia's UPT?

A: The Government aspires to upgrade the efficiency level, reliability, connectivity and capacity as well as ridership and modal share of the public transportation in the country.

Q: What has been the UPT NKRA contribution in stimulating the demand or reliance on public transportation among the urban population?

A: Currently, UPT in the Klang Valley is the major pain point for commuters with over-capacity and congestion, unreliable services, little or no connectivity and discomfort being the normal scenario. It is difficult to

stimulate demand for UPT if there is no improvement. Therefore, in stimulating the demand or reliance on public transportation among the urban population, the UPT NKRA initiatives include the following:



Kong (left) during one of his rounds at the Masjid Jamek LRT station

■ RAIL SECTOR

- i) Improvement of the KTM Komuter capacity and services through the procurement of 38 sets of new six-car trains and upgrading of ancillary services (signalling, automated fare collection system, automated train protection system, upgrading of disabled-friendly facilities at the stations, improving the public information system and CCTVs, new depot in Seremban, park 'n ride facilities at major stations, etc);
- ii) Improvement in the Kelana Jaya LRT services through the procurement of 35 sets of four-car trains of which 26 sets are already in service; new automated fare collection system; upgrading of 29 stations for the Ampang LRT line by providing facilities for the disabled as well as park 'n ride facilities at major LRT stations such as Gombak, Bandar Tasik Selatan, Sungai Besi and Ampang);

- iii) Improvement of the Monorail services through the procurement of 12 sets of four-car trains.

■ BUS SECTOR

- i) Introduction of six Bus Expressway Transit (BET) services from Subang Mewah, Taman Sri Mega, Kota Damansara, Bandar Sungai Long, Rawang and Bukit Beruntung to Pasar Seni (Central Market);
- ii) Implementing a study to identify the corridors for bus lanes and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), which will be completed in Aug 2011;
- iii) Refurbishment of 634 existing bus stops which have been implemented and completed in 2010, and
- iv) Construction of 306 new bus stops (not more than 400 meters from housing areas);
- v) Improvement of feeder services from housing areas to LRT stations through Prasarana and RapidKL's initiatives (procurement of 470 buses).

■ INTEGRATION SECTOR

- i) Integrate LRT stations with other systems station – at Masjid Jamek between LRT Kelana Jaya Line and LRT Ampang Line; at Titiwangsa Station between LRT Ampang Line and the Monorail, and at Hang Tuah station between LRT Kelana Jaya Line and Monorail stations;
- ii) Integrate Monorail Station at Brickfields with KL Sentral.

■ NETWORK SECTOR

This initiative will be implemented by the Land Public Transport Commission (LPTC). Once implemented, the performance of public buses can be monitored in terms of its efficiency, timeliness and effectiveness.

Q: What would you deem the most impressive achievement to date and what contributed to the success?

A: The most impressive achievement is the BET where the

ridership has increased by 192% from the day we first started this service (January 2010). We currently have six BET services in operation. We are looking at implementing four additional routes for this service.

The other impressive achievement is the LRT Kelana Jaya Line where to date we have 26 four-car trains in operation. Last year, there were 2.43 million more commuters taking this service, of which 31.6% did so during the morning peak period.

The commitment of all the stakeholders (Prasarana and RapidKL Buses, Setara Jaya buses, the Highway Authority of Malaysia (LLM), LPTC, PEMANDU, local authorities, etc) has made it possible for us to implement and succeed in this programme.

Q: What are the various shortcomings that the UPT NKRA encounters and how does it address the issue?

A: Initially, we were unable to get cooperation from some of the agencies involved in implementing the NKRA initiatives. As we progressed along, we were able to overcome various problems and shortcomings through close collaboration with the relevant agencies and also by leveraging on the strength of the Delivery Task Force committee chaired by the Prime Minister and subsequently by the Deputy Prime Minister.

Q: Overall, has the public perception on the state of our UPT shown any improvement? What are the lessons learnt to date?

A: Yes, public perception is somewhat changing for the better with the improvement that we have done to date.

We realise the need to inform the public from time-to-time on the progress of the UPT initiatives. Likewise, basic information for the purpose of implementing the various programmes has to be sought as soon as possible and verified. 