

Home

**Kembara Kenali Borneo: Lawas ready to welcome King, Queen**

>5

World

**Indonesia halves output at coal power plant as pollution spikes**

>11

Sport

**Philomena wins historic Asian bodybuilding title**

>16



## Transforming public transportation

Sarawak has ordered 38 ART vehicles to provide efficient coverage of three lines in Kuching, says Premier

Samuel Aubrey

**KUCHING:** A total of 38 units of Autonomous Rapid Transit (ART) vehicles have already been ordered by the Sarawak government to transform the state's public transportation system, said Premier Datuk Patinggi Tan Sri Abang Johari Tun Openg.

He explained these ART vehicles, or coaches as referred to by him, will arrive upon the successful completion of the engineering run and Proof-of-Concept (POC) exercise.

He, however, did not reveal the costs involved for the purchase of the ART vehicles.

This (hydrogen-powered prototype ART vehicle) one has arrived and it will be followed by the rest when we (have) completed the Proof of Concept.

"Once it (POC) is done successfully, then the rest will be coming," he told a press conference after the official launch of the engineering run and Stage 2 of the POC exercise for the prototype ART vehicle yesterday.

He and several members of the state Cabinet, including deputy premiers Datuk Amar Douglas Uggah Embas and Dato Sri Dr Sim Kui Hian, went on a test ride on the prototype ART vehicle together with other invited guests, along the engineering run route at the Kuching Isthmus.

According to Abang Johari, the 38 ART vehicles will provide efficient coverage of the three ART lines in Kuching, namely the Red Line, Green Line and Blue Line.

To a question, he said the commercial run of the ART will be by the end of 2025, and there will be trial period before the commencement of the commercial run.



Abang Johari (centre) scans his 'ticket' as he and other dignitaries prepare to go for the test ride on board the hydrogen-powered ART prototype vehicle. - Information Department photo

"But don't complain during the trial. Some people already complained it is like a big bus. It is really a big bus - a combination hybrid of bus and train. But for me, as long as it can accommodate big volume of passengers, and it runs on schedule and (is) affordable," he said.

He also said the fare for the ART upon its commencement of

service will be decided later and pledged it will not be a burden to the public.

"Initially, there will be special fare to encourage people to use public transport," he said.

He also said the stations for the ART will be developed along the Sarawak model, and not necessarily following the model already used in Kuala Lumpur public transportation.

"We will not follow KL, we will have our own Sarawak model which is convenient to the public. There will be hydrogen feeder buses for those going to and exiting the station, which will ease traffic congestion and will be convenient for those coming from Samarahan going to Kuching.

"If follow KL, 'susah' (difficult). Do you remember KL used to

have those mini buses?"

Abang Johari also said the ART system represented the investment put in by the state government in transforming the public transportation which will benefit the people in the long run.

He also believed this will spur the development of housing estates where public transport is convenient.

This (hydrogen-powered prototype ART vehicle) one has arrived and it will be followed by the rest when we (have) completed the Proof of Concept. Once it (POC) is done successfully, then the rest will be coming.

Datuk Patinggi Tan Sri Abang Johari Tun Openg

"It will be connecting Samarahan up to Kuching. The benefit is this - one, it will be used by the public; two, the low-income people will be able to have flexible and affordable mobility within Kuching; three, it is also tourist-friendly, meaning they can go to a destination using ART such as going from Kuching to Damai.

"And four, the fare is going to be consistent and payment can be made through S Pay Global which is convenient," he added.

On the test ride, the premier described it as "comfortable" though there were many passengers on board the three carriages.

"There were many passengers but it is a test. So it was running quite well," he said.

To a question, he said the ART can be extended from the usual three carriages to a maximum of five if there is demand.

He also said special compartments can be considered for those bringing livestock and plants, after he was asked on the need of passengers who want to bring back durians from Serian.

### Sarawak deputy minister to the rescue after

### Malaysia lifts ban on live cattle, buffalo imports from Australia