

PRESS STATEMENT

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Overwhelming Response to IRSE Malaysia 2023 Conference in Kuching

KUCHING: Response to the Institution of Railway Signal Engineers (IRSE) Malaysia 2023 Conference, held for the first time in Kuching, has been overwhelming, with more than 200 delegates attending the two-day conference.

Congratulating both IRSE Malaysia Section and Sarawak Metro Sdn Bhd for organising the conference here, Minister for Transport Sarawak Dato Sri Lee Kim Shin said the conference was an ideal platform for the sharing of knowledge and expertise, especially for those involved in the public transport industry.

“This conference will be beneficial to those involved in public transportation and it augurs well for Sarawak’s efforts to modernise the public transport network in the State,” said Lee.

He added that he was impressed with the speakers’ line-up, which was made up mostly of IRSE members from various countries, and that the speakers’ list was a good indicator of the organisation’s reputation as an internationally recognized professional engineering institution that has been around since 1912, with IRSE Malaysia Section established in 2013.

Acknowledging IRSE’s focus on improving the railway safety standards and enhancing the competency of railway signalling, communication, and system engineers, Lee said having the conference in Sarawak this year was well timed to coincide with Sarawak’s move to incorporate new technology in the public transportation sector, namely the development of the Kuching Urban Transportation System (KUTS) project.

Pointing out that the KUTS project aimed to ease traffic congestion in Greater Kuching, Lee said the development is also in response to the Sarawak Government's intention to decarbonise public transportation by utilising zero-emission vehicles.

"I am happy to say that Sarawak is already embarking on the utilisation of zero-emission vehicles with the introduction of our hydrogen-powered buses which are currently on trial operations," said Lee, adding that the KUTS project will also utilise the hydrogen-powered Autonomous Rapid Transit (ART) vehicle to provide reliable and sustainable transportation.

As technology is constantly evolving, the need to have certified and skilled manpower, be it engineers and technicians, is vital and thus Lee encouraged IRSE to play its part in creating a pool of skilled manpower that can meet the demands of the industry.

"We hope this could create awareness of the career opportunities in railway signal, communication, and system engineering among the youths.

"We now have ready examples for youths to emulate to pursue their career in signalling and communication engineering," Lee said, while also commending IRSE and Sarawak Metro for including a topic on achieving net-zero emissions for the railway industry in this year's conference.

Meanwhile, the organising chairman of the conference, Ir. Shahrizaman Zamhury, also called on IRSE members to work together to mitigate the effects of climate change.

"The transportation industry is one of the major contributors of greenhouse emissions and we cannot ignore the impact this sector has on the environment," said Shahrizaman, who is also the outgoing chairman of IRSE Malaysia Section.

Nevertheless, he was happy to see there have been significant changes made in the transportation industry with some already adopting more sustainable practices and gradually transitioning to utilising green technology.

"At IRSE, we have a vital role to support this transition besides adopting safety standard practices in railway. We must encourage and support our members and the public in adopting sustainable practices, and we must also work to develop new technologies that can help to achieve our goals."

The launching ceremony was also attended by Deputy Minister for Transport Sarawak Datuk Dr Jerip Susil, Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Transport Sarawak Dato Ir. Alice Jawan Empaling, chairman of Sarawak Economic Development Corporation (SEDC) and Chairman of Sarawak Metro Sdn Bhd, Tan Sri Datuk Amar Haji Abdul Aziz bin Dato Haji Husain, Chief Executive Officer of Sarawak Metro Ts. Mazli Mustaffa and IRSE President Andy Knight.

At the same event, the delegates also witnessed the installation of Mazli as the new chairman of IRSE Malaysia Section.

The installation ceremony was marked by the handing over of the IRSE Chairman's instrument of office, in the form of a signaling token key, which was used in signalling systems in the past to provide access for trains to go on tracks between two stations.

Earlier in his welcoming speech, Mazli expressed his hope to inculcate greater interest among the local youths to take up a career in signal and communication engineering.

"Our hope is also to encourage the younger generation to specialise in this field of signalling and communication, as these two components of engineering will be widely applied to our very own Kuching Urban Transportation System project," said Mazli.

The two-day conference, held at Riverside Majestic Hotel here, registered delegates from Sarawak, Sabah, Peninsula Malaysia, Indonesia, Hong Kong, China, Singapore, Japan, India, and the United Kingdom.

The 10 papers presented at the two-day conference were "Shaping the Future" by Andy Knight; "Transforming Public Transport for Sarawak" by Dato Ir. Alice; "New Approach and Challenges on Signalling CBTC for Private LTE System" by Mohd Azrul Osman; "Metro Signalling Safety, from Generic Product to a Safety Operating System" by Robert Cooke; "The Role of the Railway System in Achieving Future Net-Zero Emissions by Ismail Abdullah; "Transportation Planning in Nusantara New Capital City of Indonesia" by Ahmad Sugiana; "Mobility-as-a-Service for Emerging Markets" by Ramachandran Muniandy; "An Alternative Approach for Train Localisation in Urban Railway Setting Harnessing the Trends in the Digital System for LRT Kelana Jaya" by Ir. Jasbinder Singh; "Challenges in Charting New

Ground” by Mohd Samsir bin Saudah; and “Interconnection and Intelligence of Urban Rail Transit” by Liu Wei.

End.

Photos and caption:



ALL ABOARD...Lee symbolically launching the IRSE Malaysia 2023 Conference using an authentic ‘signal’ flag that was used in the past for rail operations in the country.



OVER TO YOU...Shahrizaman (5th from left) presenting Mazli with the IRSE Malaysia Section Chairman’s instrument of office, witnessed by Lee and other invited guests.

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