

For Immediate Release

Press Release

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City of Yibin finds inspiration in Sarawak's adoption of hydrogen powered ART vehicles

KUCHING: Sichuan Chuannan Rail Transit Operation Co Ltd, the world's largest operator of Autonomous Rapid Transit (ART) vehicles in the city of Yibin, is set to add hydrogen powered ART vehicles to its battery electric powered fleet in the coming years.

This was revealed by the company to Sarawak Metro Sdn Bhd, during the latter's recent visit to China.

According to Sarawak Metro Chief Executive Officer, Ts. Mazli Mustafa, Sichuan Chuannan Rail Transit Operation's decision to introduce the hydrogen powered ART vehicles was in some ways inspired by the Kuching Urban Transportation System (KUTS) project that is being implemented now.

"It is indeed inspiring to learn that what we are doing in Sarawak is also inspiring others to adopt hydrogen technology as we all look to solutions to decarbonise our fleets," said Mazli, during his recent trip to China for the pre-commissioning and physical inspection of the KUTS project's first ART vehicle at CRRC's ART manufacturing facility in Yibin, Sichuan province.

Sichuan Chuannan Rail Transit Operation's fleet of 60 ART vehicles currently serves a ridership of 50,000 per day, and this is expected to go up to 100,000 per day when it completes its latest line.

"With Yibin adding at least five new hydrogen-powered ART vehicles to its fleet of zero emission vehicles, this further demonstrates the global potential of hydrogen as a clean and efficient energy

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source for public transport," said Mazli, who also had the opportunity to take a closer look at Sichuan Chuannan Rail Transit Operation's first hydrogen powered ART vehicle during his visit.

Apart from this latest development in Sichuan province, the city of Lingang, located in the southeast of Shanghai, also continues to be served by a fleet of hydrogen powered Digital Rapid Transit (DRT) vehicles, which are quite similar to the ART vehicles used in Yibin.

The three lines operated by Shanghai Lingang New Area Public Transportation Co Ltd have been served by its 23 units of hydrogen powered DRT vehicles, since 2021.

Regionally, initiatives to decarbonise public transport networks also includes efforts in South Korea, where the city of Daejeon is advancing its new hydrogen light rail project, with the introduction of its first hydrogen powered trams.

Additionally, Hyundai has committed to supplying 1,000 units of hydrogen buses for public transportation by 2027.

"I believe these and many other initiatives worldwide reflect a growing international commitment to hydrogen technology in public transportation and at Sarawak Metro, we remain confident in our decision to adopt hydrogen powered public transport systems," said Mazli.

He added that one of the advantages for Sarawak Metro and the KUTS project is Sarawak is uniquely positioned to embrace this technology, thanks to Sarawak's abundant natural resources that enable the production of green hydrogen locally.

"This capability, as well as Sarawak's vision and commitment in developing this new green energy, allows us to support our long-term vision of reducing carbon emissions and building a more sustainable public transport network for the people."

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Mazli also pointed out that as hydrogen technology continues to evolve and gain traction, Sarawak Metro remains focused in its mission to provide safe, reliable, comfortable and convenient public transport services while leading efforts to decarbonise the public transport sector in line with Sarawak’s environmental and economic goals.

“By leveraging on Sarawak’s unique resources and proactively adopting clean energy technologies, Sarawak Metro aspires to set a regional precedent for sustainable urban public transport while addressing the climate challenges of our time,” said Mazli.

Ends.

About Sarawak Metro and KUTS project:

Sarawak Metro Sdn Bhd (Sarawak Metro), a wholly owned subsidiary of Sarawak Economic Development Corporation (SEDC), has been entrusted by the Sarawak Government to modernise public transport through the Kuching Urban Transportation System (KUTS) project.

Sarawak Metro has been tasked to implement, operate and maintain the KUTS project.

The project is being developed in phases, and Phase 1 includes the development of three lines: the Blue Line from Rembus in Kota Samarahan to Hikmah Exchange in the city centre; the Red Line, from Kuching Sentral to Pending; and the Green Line, from Pending to Damai.

Construction of the first package for the Blue Line is expected to complete by the fourth quarter of 2025 and all three lines are scheduled to be fully completed by the end of 2027.

The backbone of the KUTS project is the introduction of the zero-emission Autonomous Rapid Transit (ART) hydrogen vehicles.

The ART vehicles will be operated on dedicated lanes, meaning they will not share the lane with other road users. The ART hydrogen vehicles will run on rubber tires, and hence the dedicated lanes will be trackless. The lanes will mostly be at-grade (road level) while certain sections of the alignment will be elevated.

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The ART operation will be supported by a network of feeder buses, which will also consist of hydrogen-powered vehicles to offer the ‘first mile and last mile’ connectivity for commuters.

The move to use hydrogen is in line with the Sarawak Government’s aspirations to advance the hydrogen economy and to decarbonise public transport in Sarawak.

Photos and Captions:



The city of Yibin, which is already served by the largest ART fleet in the world, is set to enhance its zero-emission public transport system with new hydrogen powered ART vehicles in the coming months



This first hydrogen-powered ART vehicle for the KUTS project is set to arrive in Kuching by the end of the year

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