

CM: Govt aims to have ART public transport system ready in Kuching by 2025

BY RINTOS MAIL ON JANUARY 4, 2020, SATURDAY AT 5:25 PMNEWS. SARAWAK



An autonomous railless train in action. Photo source: CRRC

KUCHING: Sarawak hopes to see the Autonomous Rail Transit (ART) public transport system on the streets by 2025.

Chief Minister Datuk Patinggi Abang Johari Tun Openg said there was a need to have the ART transport system, especially in Kuching due to the increasingly large number of traffic jams that motorists are facing along major roads.

“If possible, the ART transport system should be ready by 2025. When we are already there, then we can go towards 2030 because the moment the Kuching-Samarahan lane has been completed, our public transport will have been improved.

“Then, we can go towards achieving a developed state in 2030, including in terms of public transport,” he told a press conference at the launch of the P’ Residence Block Pandelega in Batu Kawa here today.

The chief minister said this when asked if he had set a deadline for the ART system to be implemented.

Previously, Transport Minister Datuk Lee Kim Shin had stated that the ART system would be operational by 2022, and that the government was looking into the type of ART vehicle that was suitable for the state.

He said the study for the ART transport system in Kuching was currently ongoing, adding that he had given the Ministry of Transport a certain date to complete the study and once the study was completed, they will have to procure the coaches.

“I do not know when exactly we can start to construct the lane. It depends on when the studies are done. But definitely, we are doing the Kuching-Samarahan first and the lanes have been identified,” he said.

Abang Johari said he was also aware that certain quarters have said he had failed to deliver his promise of providing the Light Rail Transit (LRT) transportation system to the people of Kuching by 2020.

The LRT system has since taken a backseat to the proposed ART system, which Abang Johari had previously said would cost only one-third of the expenditures involved in building the LRT system.

He explained that he could not proceed with it because when he wanted to do it, there were people who opposed it.

“Some people said yes, some people said no and some people said it was a waste of the government’s money.

“What I do, if that is the case, I slow it down. Now there is a new mode of transport, the ART. This is something very new but it has been used in Korea, Japan and China.

“Because it does not use rails, but tires, the cost is cheaper. So we are going to do that,” he said.

“We want to start with the Kuching-Samarahan route first, and then the next will be the Batu Kawa to Bau route, and Bau to Sematan,” he said.