

## ERL keeps fares at RM55

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SALAK TINGGI: Express Rail Link Sdn Bhd (ERL) will keep its express train fare to the Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA) at RM55 although it has been allowed to raise it to RM64.

“The current fare will stay for now until such time when the market is ready for another revision. But for now it’s RM55, although the government has allowed us to increase the fare to RM64,” said ERL chief executive officer Noormah Mohd Noor after the unveiling of the first set of new KLIA Transit trains, here, yesterday.

Also present were Transport Minister Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai, ERL executive chairman Tan Sri Mohd Nadzmi Mohd Salleh and CRRC Changchun Railway Vehicles Co Ltd (CRRC Changchun) vice-president of high speed and main line, Lou Yanjun.

ERL announced a new fare of RM55 for a one-way high-speed train trip between KL Sentral, KLIA and Kuala Lumpur International Airport 2 (klia2) last December.

The company was authorised to increase the rate to RM64 from RM35 but instead chose to fix it at a discounted price of RM55. Meanwhile, ERL has expected a slight drop in ridership this year due to the December fare hike.

“As we expected, due to the fare increase, there was a slight decline in the number of passengers but our revenue increased,” said Noormah. She said the ridership target for this year was 9.7 million. Last year, ERL carried 11 million passengers.

As in October this year, ERL has transported 76 million passengers since it started operations in 2002. It expects the ridership number to hit 100 million soon as it will start using new six-train sets bought from China’s CRRC Changchun from March next year.

Commenting on the train purchases, Liow said the partnership between ERL and CRRC Changchun was a microcosm of the closer ties between Malaysia and China.

Meanwhile, on the 2017 Budget, Liow expected the urban transportation investment allocation to continue increasing. The government has taken some measures to improve public transport.

Among them are by upgrading the system and infrastructure of the Klang Valley double-track project that will be completed in 2019, as well as via the launch of the Light Rail Transit Line 3 project and construction of the Gemas-Johor Baru electrified double-tracking rail.

“These are important investments... I’m looking forward to the new budget to enhance public transportation further,” said Liow.

