

## 6 New trains to boost ERL passenger capacity by 50 pc

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SEPANG : The passenger capacity of KLIA Ekspres and KLIA Transit will increase by 50 per cent with the launch of additional six trains yesterday.

Transport Minister Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai said Express Rail Link Sdn Bhd (ERL) would also increase the frequency of KLIA Transit from today onwards, to be at par with KLIA Ekspres.

“With a total of 18 trains , we are hopeful that we can offer better services and comfort to passengers to win their trust and increase ridership.” ERL has extended its services to some 88 million passengers” he said after unveiling the trains at Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA), here.

The trains were manufactured by CRRC Changchun Railway Vehicles Co.Ltd. ERL bought them in 2014 to meet strong passenger demand and boost comfort. The company is targeting a five per cent increase in daily ridership this year from 23,900 last year.

“Since the fare hike in 2016, ridership has fallen by 19 per cent. Passenger numbers have risen slightly. We hope to increase it further this year,” said Liow.

He hoped the government would provide better connectivity for the people by boosting services and introducing rail projects such as high-speed rail (HSR). “Besides connecting Singapore and Malaysia through HSR, which is expected to be completed in 2026, we are now in talks with our Thailand counterparts to expand HSR to Bangkok and eventually to China.

“ The transport ministries of both countries have established a committee to discuss the initiative. The discussion is currently in the initial stages.” In conjunction with the launch of six trains, Liow announced that ERL would be offering free train rides on KLIA Ekspres and KLIA Transit to families with children under 12 this weekend.

On a separate matter, he said the recent delays in Keretapi Tanah Melayu Bhd’s (KTMB) train services were due to the closure of one of its tracks.

“In an effort to provide efficient train services to the people, the government has allocated RM14 billion to upgrade KTMB’s services.” We have closed one of the train tracks for upgrading and maintenance works. I hope the people will understand and bear with us as we promise the services will be much better after the upgrade is completed,” Liow added.