

# 'MANAGE INTERNAL TRAFFIC'

This will ensure redevelopment plan reduces congestion, say experts

ADIB POVERA  
KUALA LUMPUR  
adibpovera@nst.com.my

**T**HE government should consider incorporating internal traffic management into its redevelopment plan for Kuala Lumpur Sentral, experts said.

This, they said, was to ensure that the redevelopment of the major transportation hub, scheduled to take place by year end, would meet its target of reducing traffic congestion in the area.

Transport consultant Wan Agyl Wan Hassan said traffic in areas around KL Sentral would be very congested during peak hours.

"Such a situation deterred e-hailing and taxi drivers from coming (to the KL Sentral area), even though there are dedicated areas to drop off passengers.

"Therefore, in this case, the internal traffic management for areas around KL Sentral must not be overlooked," said Wan Agyl, who is the founder and managing partner of Agyl and Partners.

The former Land Public Transport Commission operation policy and planning division head also proposed that the government consider developing facilities to make KL Sentral "more friendly" to pedestrians.

This, he said, might encourage people to take public transport to KL Sentral, reducing the influx of private vehicles entering the area.

Associate Professor Dr Nur Sabahiah Abdul Sukor of Universiti Sains Malaysia's School of Civil Engineering concurred with Wan Agyl on his call to enhance accessibility to KL Sentral.

"It is imperative to not only have covered walkways, but also to ensure proper maintenance, the inclusion of proper signage, provision of pedestrian-friendly pavements, uninterrupted connectivity and incorporation of facilities available to vulnerable users, such as tactile paving for the visually impaired and ramps for wheelchair users and parents with strollers," she said.

She added that redevelopment of KL Sentral must not only promote the use of public transport, but also ensure the wellbeing and satisfaction of travellers.

"I am a frequent user of KL Sentral, especially when commuting via the Electric Train Service from the north of Peninsular Malaysia to Kuala Lumpur. I usually take the train, whether the Express Rail Link or Light Rail Transit, to get to the destination.

"However, due to time constraints, I find e-hailing rides to be the fastest option.

"Inquiring about the traffic level around KL Sentral reveals the need for a new accessibility plan due to the high use of e-hailing rides and the large number of people waiting for private vehicles at the main gate."

Associate Professor Dr Law Teik Hua said among the ways

the government could tackle congestion around KL Sentral was to discourage private vehicles from entering the area by introducing road pricing, which had been implemented in Singapore.

Road pricing is an initiative in which toll charges are levied on vehicles according to time and congestion levels.

Before introducing the initiative, Law said, the government must ensure there is ample public transport available on a frequent basis to travel to KL Sentral.

"The government should look into increasing connectivity with KL Sentral. I know that there are several modes of transport available such as the LRT and commuter trains.

"We have to also consider if more train lines within the area are needed to increase connectivity," said Law, who is a road safety expert from Universiti Putra Malaysia.

Earlier, Transport Minister Anthony Loke said the redevelopment of KL Sentral was expected to start by year end.

The redevelopment, said Loke, was necessary since KL Sentral had seen "tremendous" growth in the past 20 years and the area had become congested.

"The government is of the view that there is a pressing need to not only add value to KL Sentral, but also look into ways to reduce congestion in the area.

"We want the area to be redesigned, rebuilt and repurposed so that it becomes sophisticated. We hope after the redevelopment has been completed, there will be better traffic flow in the area.

"Negotiations between MRCB (Malaysian Resources Corporation Bhd) and the Public-Private Partnership Unit is ongoing to redevelop KL Sentral. We expect that the physical project (on KL Sentral redevelopment) will begin by year end," he said after opening Menara RAC here yesterday.

Present was Transport Ministry secretary-general Datuk Jana Santhiran Muniayan, who is Railway Assets Corporation chairman.

"The main issue with KL Sentral is that the congestion in the area is extremely bad. The situation in the area worsened when ETS passengers arrive (to travel into or out of the city).

"Such a situation will be looked into in our plan," said Loke.

On whether the redevelopment would see increased frequency of public transport services, such as buses and LRT, Loke replied in the affirmative.

"If there is a request, we will definitely increase the frequency. We have increased the frequency of the LRT Kelana Jaya line, which passes the KLCC area, to three minutes."

Last year, the cabinet approved the proposal to redevelop KL Sentral to ease the congestion of commuters and vehicles.

The Transport Ministry had proposed that the RM1 billion redevelopment cost would be borne by MRCB as the primary developer.

Loke said the redevelopment would not have any financial implications on the government.

He had also said that the redevelopment would not impact public transport services, such as the LRT, KTM and ETS.