

'Double-tracking system will boost passenger capacity'

KERETAPI Tanah Melayu Bhd (KTMB) says its passenger capacity will surge by between four and five times in 2012, upon completion of the double-track railway projects between Ipoh and Padang Besar, and between Seremban and Gemas.

The national railway operator currently transports 3.8 million passengers a year on its intercity services, its managing director Datuk Mohd Salleh Abdullah said.

He said it was vital that KTM, a loss-making company, turns to double-tracks in order to improve its services.

"Single track is bleeding us. You can never run a railway efficiently, economically or effectively with single tracks," he said.

The Government is currently "seriously considering" double-tracking the Gemas-Singapore route, he said.

The double-track between Rawang and Ipoh, meanwhile, is expected to be completed by the end of this year, with services starting in early 2008, he said.

He hoped that work on the double-track project between Ipoh and Padang Besar would begin by the middle of this year as it would take five years to build. He expects all the lines to be double-tracked by 2012.

Mohd Salleh said an electrified double track system would help increase services by up to ten times from the current 22 services offered daily.