

Automated rapid transit arrives in Johor for testing, to be test line for Iskandar Malaysia BRT system project

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Automated Rapid Transit in China

The first automated rapid transit (ART) system has arrived in Johor for its bus pilot testing programme, which has been slated to commence in Iskandar Malaysia in the southern state in the first quarter of this year, reports [The Edge Markets](#). This is managed by Mobilus, a joint venture of 51:49 share between Ireka Corporation and CRRC Urban Traffic, the latter a member of the CRRC Group.

The commencement of testing this year comes after its original schedule for 2020 had been delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and the ART bus pilot testing programme in Iskandar Malaysia will also showcase seven other bus manufacturers, said Ireka group managing director Datuk Lai Voon Hon.

“This will be one of the test lines for the larger [Iskandar Malaysia Bus Rapid Transit \(IMBRT\) project](#), a comprehensive transit system for Iskandar Malaysia covering a network of more than 2,000km in Phase 1,” the managing director said in a statement.

The ART is classed as a medium-capacity transit system for urban passenger transport, which allows for higher passenger capacity at a lower cost of implementation compare to light-rail systems, and will run on clean sources of energy such as electricity or hydrogen, said [The Edge Markets](#).



The vehicles are manufactured by the China Railway Construction Corporation (CRCC) which previously made the KTM Intercity carriages, and a 10-minute charge of the vehicle's batteries can yield a range of up to 24 km, said its manufacturer.

The multi-carriage vehicles are outfitted with sensors to locate virtual tracks on the road that help it navigate its own route autonomously through the road network, and can travel at up to 70 km/h, though there is still provision for a driver to be tasked with its operation for added safety.

These vehicles will have a passenger capacity of more than 300 passengers in three carriages, it said. This can be expandable to accommodate around 500 passengers in five carriages, according to the report.

The implementation of the ART pilot project will be a key step towards aiding in the improvement of public transport in Iskandar Malaysia as well as for the promotion of rapid development of the region's economy and society, Lai said.



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Alongside the pilot testing programme, a technical feasibility study will be conducted by the Malaysia Institute of Transport (MITRANS), an institute of Universiti Teknologi MARA, *The Edge Markets* said.

A feasibility report will be provided by MITRANS on the adoption of ART as a new urban transport system at the end of the pilot testing programme in Johor, with reference to the current road infrastructure and public transport environment in Malaysia, it said.

The latest city to adopt the ART is the city of Yibin in Sichuan, China, and the T1 line in the city is the first of seven lines that was officially launched in December 2019 following a trial period. This T1 line runs 17.7 km through the city's central business district, and connects to the high-speed railway terminus in that city.

The Chinese city with a population of around 4.5 million has been reported to have more than 25,000 daily commuters using the line, and traffic congestion in Yibin has reportedly been reduced by 20% since the ART T1 line opened, according to *The Edge Markets*.