

Iskandar Malaysia BRT starts three-month pilot testing

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Right on schedule, the **Iskandar Malaysia Bus Rapid Transit (IMBRT)** has entered its pilot testing phase today, officiated by Johor chief minister Datuk Hasni Mohammad. The high-capacity electric bus passed through Persiaran Puteri Selatan, Jalan Laksamana 1 and 2 and Persiaran Dato' Seri Amar before returning to the starting point.

As previously reported, the three-month programme will test the buses' capabilities and demonstrate the use of green technology, in line with the southern state's modernisation of its public transport system. The Iskandar Regional Development Authority (IRDA) and other agencies will test electric and biodiesel (previously reported as hybrid) buses from nine local and international suppliers, conducting assessments, collecting feedback on their effectiveness and safety and securing approval for their use.

Hasni said that the project is important to increase the mobility of Johoreans. "This service will ensure an efficient, convenient and environmentally-friendly public transportation system, covering a wide range of areas," he said. "I am confident that it will be a catalyst for development, not only for the Iskandar Malaysia area, but for the entire state of Johor."



Adding to this, IRDA chief executive Datuk Ismail Ibrahim emphasised the importance of an efficient and integrated public transport infrastructure in attracting foreign and domestic investments – hence increasing the attractiveness of the development corridor. “This IMBRT project is expected to create up to 35,000 jobs and increase Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for Johor,” he said.

The project is said to have identified feeder, direct and main routes that reach 2,043 kilometres or around 90% of Iskandar Malaysia’s populated areas. Once fully implemented, the IMBRT will be able to connect 55 feeder routes and 44 direct routes with the main route and its 33 stations.

The first automated rapid transit (ART) buses arrived in Malaysia in January for the pilot testing programme, which was originally planned for 2020 but was delayed due to the coronavirus pandemic. The ART system is said to enable a higher passenger capacity at a lower cost compared to light-rail transit (LRT) trains and will be able to run on clean energy sources such as electricity or hydrogen.



The vehicles, produced by KTM Intercity carriage manufacturer China Railway Construction Corporation (CRCC), have a capacity of more than 300 passengers across three carriages, according to a previous report by [The Edge Markets](#). With an additional two carriages, the passenger capacity can be increased to 500.

The buses have a top speed of 70 km/h and is capable run autonomously by reading virtual tracks using its sensors, although a driver can still operate the vehicles – as was the case during the pilot. The ART was supplied by Mobilus, a 51:49 joint venture between Ireka Corporation and CRRC Urban Traffic.