Liow: Develop under utilised railway assets

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Transport Minister Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai says assets which are managed by the Railway Assets Corporation (RAC) should be developed to transport cargoes which are currently done so via roads. NSTP Pix by MOHD FADLI HAMZAH

By HASHINI KAVISHTRI KANNAN (/authors/hashini-kavishtri-kannan) - September 18, 2017 @ 9:10pm

PUTRAJAYA: A total of 60 per cent of railway assets nationwide are under utilised.

Transport Minister Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai said the assets which are managed by the Railway Assets Corporation (RAC) should be developed to transport cargoes which are currently done so via roads.

"I see this as a good way to boost the income for the RAC and the same time, to curb road accidents and congestion caused by lorries carrying cargo, he said after attending the RAC's Silver Jubilee celebration today.

Liow added that the RAC must encourage more operators to come forward to utilise and optimise the capacity of the railways.

"We need to increase our current usage from 40 per cent to 100 per cent. So that it could boost the country's economy. I have asked RAC to work together with Keretapi Tanah Melayu Berhad (KTMB) and Land Public Transport Commission (SPAD) to come with a comprehensive strategy to maximise the usage of the unused capacity," he added.

There is also a need to re-look at the cost of transporting cargoes through railways, as it is deemed to be costlier then via lorries.

"We have to look at ways to reduce the cost to transport via train especially when the cargoes arrive at the port and also build depots closer to train stations to enable greater accessibility.

"We also need to speed up the train services. All these will make the rail industry to be developed and contribute to the country's economy. This will also ensure an advanced railway connectivity and benefit the people. We are embarking on a very exciting journey to boost the railway sector in the country," he added.

Adding further, Liow said the RAC had also managed its assets well, by earning a profit of RM26 million in 2016, compared to year before only RM19 million.

"They have also managed to reduce KTMB's debts from over RM1 billion to RM420 million as of now," he revealed.

Meanwhile, on the appointment of Datuk Shaharuddin Khalid as the new director-general of the Road Transport Department (RTD), Liow attributed as being a normal process for the Public Service Commission (PSC) to appoint or transfer new officers.

"I welcome Datuk Shaharuddin to the RTD. I hope the with his enforcement background from Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC), the RTD will be further strengthened.

"On the appointment for the position of RTD enforcement director which is currently vacant, let PSC to make the decision and appoint," he said.

Earlier Liow, launched the Railway Assets Intelligence Systems (RAILS) developed by RAC.

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MENTERI Pengangkutan, Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai pada sidang media selepas merasmikan majlis Sambutan Ulang Tahun Jubli Perak RAC di Putrajaya, hari ini. Turut hadir, Pengurus Besar RAC, Dr Kang Tong Hum (kanan). - Foto Mohd Fadli Hamzah

Optimum penggunaan aset kereta api

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PUTRAJAYA: Kementerian Pengangkutan mahu aset dan infrastruktur dimiliki Perbadanan Aset Keretapi (RAC) digunakan secara optimum memandangkan kekerapan penggunaannya pada ketika ini hanya pada kadar 40 peratus.

Menterinya, Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai, berkata buat masa ini, penggunaan aset dan infrastruktur kereta api yang dimiliki RAC hanya dikendalikan oleh Keretapi Tanah Melayu Bhd (KTMB) selaku operator tunggal.

Katanya, kerajaan melihat situasi ini sebagai merugikan kerana kos yang tinggi telah dibelanjakan oleh kerajaan untuk mewujudkan jaringan pengangkutan rel yang baik, cepat dan selamat namun penggunaannya tidak mencapai tahap yang optimum.

Justeru beliau berkata dengan adanya pembabitan pengendali kereta api yang lain atau Multiple Railway Operator (MRO), penggunaan aset dan infrastruktur dapat dimaksimumkan dan situasi ini akan mewujudkan persaingan sihat.

"Sehubungan itu, kerajaan mengharapkan agar lebih banyak operator yang berpotensi dapat menonjolkan diri dan menikmati apa yang ditawarkan oleh industri rel di negara ini termasuk RAC agar pengangkutan rel di negara ini dapat berkembang pesat kerana ia penting kepada integrasi pertumbuhan ekonomi.

"Ini selaras dengan keutamaan kementerian untuk mempertingkatkan penggunaan rel secara optimum bagi mengurangkan kesesakan lalu lintas, keperluan pembangunan dengan lebih baik selain platform meningkatkan pertumbuhan logistik.

"RAC perlu bekerjasama dengan SPAD dan KTMB bagi memastikan penggunaan aset dan infrastruktur dapat digunakan secara optimum," katanya pada sidang media sempena Sambutan Ulang Tahun Jubli Perak RAC di sini, hari ini.

MENTERI Pengangkutan, Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai memotong kek ketika merasmikan majlis Sambutan Ulang Tahun Jubli Perak RAC di Putrajaya, hari ini. Turut bersama, Ketua Setiausaha Kementerian Pengangkutan, Datuk Seri Saripuddin Kassim (dua dari kanan) dan Pengurus Besar RAC, Dr Kang Tong Hum (tiga dari kiri). - Foto Mohd Fadli Hamzah

Katanya, komitmen kerajaan terhadap pembangunan dan peningkatan sektor kereta api di negara ini dapat dilihat dengan pengenalan beberapa projek di kawasan bandar dan luar bandar antaranya Transit Aliran Massa (MRT), Transit Aliran Ringan (LRT), Monorel, Express Rail Link (ERL), Laluan Rel Pantai Timur (ECRL) dan Projek Landasan Kereta Api Berkembar Elektrik (PLBE).

"Bukan itu saja, sasaran kerajaan terhadap pembangunan dan peningkatan sektor rel bukan hanya membabitkan pelaksanaan projek di semenanjung tetapi juga beberapa projek di Sabah.

"Kita turut bercadang untuk menambah depoh pengangkutan barang berdekatan pelabuhan dan landasan kereta api supaya pengendali dan operator kargo dapat menggunakan perkhidmatan kereta api untuk pengangkutan kargo berbanding lori ketika ini," katanya.

Sementara itu, berhubung pelantikan Ketua Pengarah Jabatan Pengangkutan Jalan (JPJ) baharu, Datuk Shaharuddin Khalid, Tiong Lai berkata, beliau berharap pelantikan itu dapat terus melonjak pentadbiran dan kualiti perkhidmatan jabatan berkenaan.

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