

Estimated to be worth \$14.9 billion

High-speed ambitions will boost tourism on both sides of the causeway

By Natalie Chen / August 04, 2015



The high-speed rail project by Singapore and Malaysia will boost tourism between both countries if handled well. Singapore and Malaysia will be embarking on a high-speed rail project to link both countries. Passengers will be whisked within one hour from Jurong in Singapore to Bandar Bandar Malaysia, about 5km from the landmark Petronas Twin Towers in the heart of Kuala Lumpur.

Said Katherine Cole, regional director, Hotels.com, “The upcoming high-speed rail between Singapore and Kuala Lumpur is also set to be a game changer for the travel industry, connecting travellers to the main tourist and corporate hubs in both cities. These fast and reliable travel routes will promote greater inbound tourist arrivals into both countries as the heightened ease of cross-border travel makes it more convenient for holiday makers to go for short trips across the causeway.

“The express rail will also provide a viable and cost-effective alternative for business travel and as the wheels of the high-speed rail are set in motion, we expect to see large benefits for the hospitality sector as they gear up to meet the rise in regional and international arrivals.”

Though initially targeted for completion in 2020, the premiers of both countries say this date is too premature due to the scale and complexity of the project. The design process of the new rail link will likely take one year, the tender process another year and construction about five years.

The project, estimated to be worth \$14.9 billion, has drawn great interest from construction and infrastructure firms from China and Japan. A new deadline for the completion of the link should be announced at the end of this year.

Added Crystal Sim, CEO & President of Albtatross World, “This will definitely increase the travel between both countries but by how much is unclear at the moment. To facilitate more travel, there has to be more concerted efforts by operators on both sides of the Causeway.

“Assuming they can find synergies in areas of interest, say historic attractions or sporting events, the sky is the limit for cooperation and collaborations. So long as there is peace and sociable stability, tourism is on the up and up. This is definitely a timely project for commuters if completed efficiently and cost effectively. Whether there can be further expansion remains to be seen.”

Travellers can take up to 90 minutes to commute between Singapore and Kuala Lumpur A bus ride for about six hours can cost between \$30 and \$50, while a flight of 45 minutes can cost hundreds of dollars.

Riding on the train is estimated to cost about less than 400 RM for a round trip said a report citing Malaysia's Land Public Transport Commission on May 12, 2015.



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