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# ETS for speedy travel

Passengers give good account of the newly launched Seremban-Ipoh service

Story and photos  
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**P**ASSENGERS were pleased when they boarded the train from Seremban to Ipoh in the newly launched Electric Train Service (ETS).

Beginning from the Seremban station, there were only fewer than 10 passengers, but when the train — looking like an upgraded version of the present KTM Komuter trains — approached the Nilai and Bandar Tasik Selatan stations, there were many waiting on the platform to board the ETS.

This ETS was much awaited by the people. The response, especially from KL Sentral onwards, was encouraging as it took passengers to Ipoh in just two hours.

The inaugural train service from Seremban at 5.55pm on Aug 12, took just 45 minutes to KL Sentral and the full journey to Ipoh was less than three hours.

Previously, it took passengers who travelled on the shuttle service, about three hours from just Kuala Lumpur to Ipoh.

Passengers who were on the inau-

gural Seremban-Ipoh route when interviewed said the service was excellent. They hope the ticket price would be capped at RM38 to encourage more people to use the service.

Currently, there's only one service — at 5.55pm but travellers can look forward to a 10.55am service which is scheduled to be launched soon.

More importantly, the passengers were relieved that the ETS has finally taken off. It was supposed to have started in December last year. Then it was postponed to April, July and finally the first week of August.

Passengers were on a promotional rate of RM30 for the KL-Ipoh route and RM38 for the Seremban-Ipoh route.

The promised wifi connectivity was not available and the food bar in the middle coach was not operational yet.

Once these are in place, passengers who decide on this mode of transport fear that it would not be at the promotional price any more. They fear that there could be an increase in the fare when the promotion ends in February next year.

The ETS RM30 concession fare from KL-Ipoh has been extended to Feb 28 to ensure cheap rides

throughout the festive season from this Hari Raya right up to Chinese New Year next year.

Normdas Khairul, 29, a lecturer in Alor Gajah, was the first to buy an ETS ticket at the Seremban counter. He said the service was a blessing as he was a frequent traveller to Batu Gajah.

"Previously, it would take me more than six hours, now it is all done in less than four hours. It is cheaper, faster and a convenient mode of travel. I hope they will keep the ticket price low to encourage more users," said Normdas.

As for Hizam Harun, 52, and his wife Khalidah Hasiah, 49, from Butterworth, the ETS has reduced their travelling time.

"We used to drive twice a month to visit my son who is studying in a college in Malacca. Now I just have to drive until Ipoh and hop onto the ETS. It is so convenient. At least I can relax for three hours before getting to Malacca," said Hizam.

The couple took the ETS from Ipoh in the morning and were back in Ipoh on the same day.

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**Comfortable:** Comfortable seats for passengers in the ETS.

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## Reasonable fare and facilities part of the draw

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University Islam Antarabangsa student Muhd Hazziq, 19, was on the ETS for the fun of it.

"I love to try anything that is new. My college is in Nilai and I stay in Kuala Lumpur. I went to Seremban just to try the ETS and did not mind paying the RM16 fare. Usually my fare is RM4.70 from Nilai to Kuala Lumpur on the komuter," said Muhd Hazziq.

He said he would keep the ETS ticket as part of his collection.

Like Muhd Hazziq, Normaliana Roslan, 20, from Uniten in Bandar Muadzam Shah in Pahang and who was travelling to Ipoh, said the ETS was more comfortable than the bus.

Australian Tom Ord, 59, and Briton Tom Harvey, 49, said although they found the service convenient, they were, however, disappointed because there was no wi-fi service.

"Due to the nature of my job, I use the laptop most of the time. I travel often and hope the next time around, there is wi-fi connection," said Harvey.

Ord was, however, disappointed because there was a lack of signages and information at KL Sentral to inform passengers the time the train was arriving.

"The area was also dark and I had to move through several barricades to get to the platform. The lack of information on the new services was rather disheartening," added Ord.

Another passenger S. Kanapathy, 36, loves the comfort and the fact that he can keep his schedules.

"The fare at RM30 is reasonable. Hopefully, they would cap it at that. I am home every weekend. Usually I take the shuttle service and now the ETS saves me time. I hope the ETS keeps to its schedule," said Kanapathy.

As for Yvonne Blake, 50, she was

just checking out the ETS.

"I drive to Ipoh during weekends to visit my parents. If the train can reduce my travelling time, then I would just forget about driving," said Blake.

Other passengers said they opted for the train because of the availability of toilets compared with express buses on long journeys where they had to stop at rest areas along the highways.

The ETS is equipped with two uni-sex and two disabled toilets, a buffet carriage, two closed-circuit television cameras per coach and two liquid crystal displays per coach, for advertising and information purposes.

There are five sets of six-car trains and it stops at Nilai, Bandar Tasik Selatan, KL Sentral, Tg Malim, Tapah, Kampar and Batu Gajah stations.

For more information, visit, <http://www.ets-train.com.my/>



**Thumbs-up for service:** Hizam and Khalidah on their way to Ipoh from Seremban.



**The first:** Normdas buying a ticket at the counter in Seremban for the trip to Ipoh