BUSINESS NEWS

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FUTURE CITIES

Tomorrow's Metropolises

THE PEOPLE AND THEIR CITIES

Why KL, Penang, and Johor Bahru Must Go 100% Smart—Now

MORE STORIES INSIDE:

UPM AND HUAWEI: THE WORLD'S FIRST PASSIVE ETHERNET NETWORK FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

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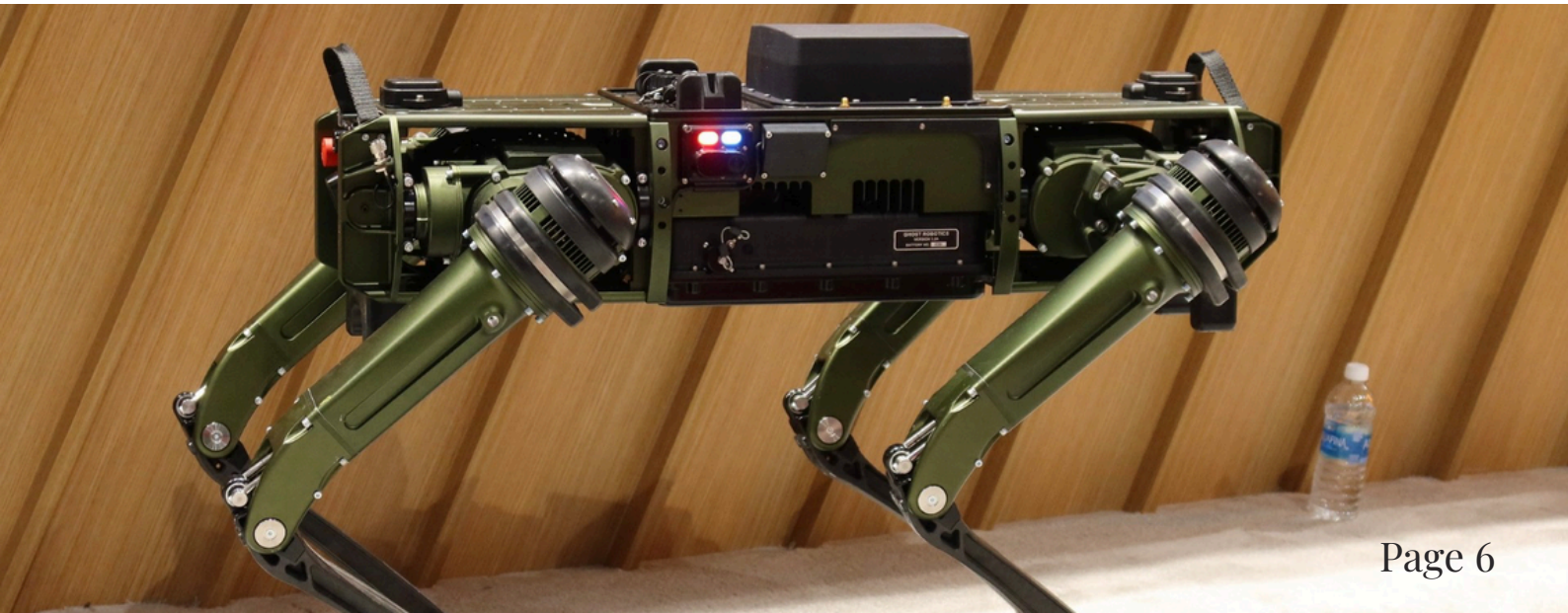
How AIoT, Robotics, and Intelligent Systems Are Shaping Our Future

Imagine stepping into a vibrant, futuristic city where AIoT weaves intelligence into every corner of daily life. As I reflect on the rapid strides in IT, IoT, AIoT, AI, and robotics, it's clear we're hurtling toward smarter, more connected urban havens that enhance our existence without overwhelming it.

Take security in your neighborhood: Gone are the days of relying solely on patrols. Today, in places like Cincinnati and El Paso, Drone as First Responder (DFR) programs deploy autonomous drones integrated with 911 systems, arriving at emergencies in under 90 seconds for surveillance, search and rescue, or traffic monitoring. These flying guardians, equipped with AI for real-time analytics, complement ground robots to keep communities safe, reducing risks and response times.



How AIoT, Robotics, and Intelligent Systems Are Shaping Our Future

Now, envision hailing a robotaxi instead of owning a car. With advancements from Waymo and Tesla, costs could plummet to $1.32 per mile by 2035, potentially slashing urban car ownership by 40-50% and freeing up parking for parks. This shift might challenge our attachment to personal vehicles, but it promises less congestion and greener commutes—for better or worse, it's reshaping mobility.

Even at home, AIoT transforms pet care. Robots like Enabot's EBO or PETKIT's smart feeders dispense treats, monitor health via AI cameras, and even entertain your furry friends while you're away. Would you trust a bot to walk your dog or tend your aquarium on vacation? With smart doors using facial recognition for seamless security, it's all part of the comfortable evolution.

Sooner than we think, our cities will pulse with these innovations, making life efficient, sustainable, and secure. It's exciting, isn't it?

What do you think?

UPM and Huawei Build the World's First Passive Ethernet Network for Higher Education Outside China

Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), one of Malaysia's leading public research universities, has partnered with Huawei to deploy the world's first Passive Ethernet Network (PEN) solution in the higher education sector outside China. This groundbreaking network ushers in a new era of ultra-broadband, intelligent, and energy-efficient connectivity across UPM's student dormitories.

Empowering a Smart, High-Quality Campus Experience

UPM is a top-tier Malaysian university with over 30,000 students and staff across its 1,103-hectare Serdang campus and branch in Sarawak. To enhance students' digital experience and ensure uninterrupted learning, UPM sought to upgrade its existing dormitory network into a high-speed, new all-optical infrastructure.

UPM and Huawei: The World's First Passive Ethernet Network for Higher Education

However, the legacy copper-based system faced major challenges:

• Outdated devices and limited scalability hindered future bandwidth expansion.
• High O&M workloads due to numerous ELV rooms and complex cabling.
• Frequent connection drops during roaming, impacting service continuity and learning quality.

UPM needed a next-generation optical network architecture capable of reducing costs, simplifying maintenance, and delivering consistent performance to thousands of concurrent users.

Huawei PEN: A Leap Forward in Network Evolution

To address these challenges, Huawei introduced the Passive Ethernet Network (PEN) — a future-ready solution designed for dormitory environments. By bringing 10 Gigabit to the Room, Huawei's PEN enables high-speed connectivity with simplified architecture and smart management.

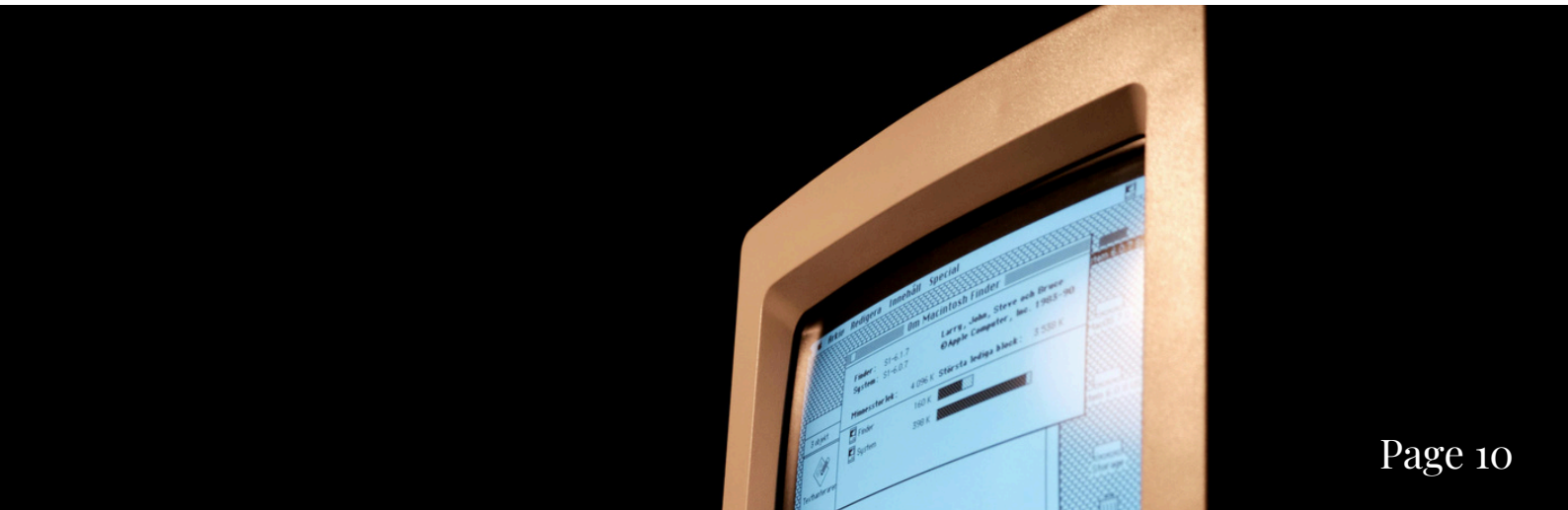
UPM and Huawei: The World's First Passive Ethernet Network for Higher Education

Solution Highlights

• Ultra-broadband performance:
160 Gbps uplink bandwidth — twice the industry average — with high-concurrency, wide-coverage wireless access and seamless roaming.

• *Intelligent & simplified design:*
Reuse of existing core switches and elimination of floor ELV rooms reduce investment and cabling complexity.

• *Smart O&M with iMaster NCE Campus:*
Cloud-based planning, 3D simulation, unified management, and minute-level fault locating drastically improve troubleshooting efficiency.



UPM and Huawei: The World's First Passive Ethernet Network for Higher Education

Secure and reliable:
Integrated WPA3, and WIPS provide full security assurance for dormitory environments.

• *Energy-saving architecture:*
Passive components and network-level power management reduce electricity and cooling requirements.

Customer Benefits

• *10 Gigabit to the Room:*
Direct fiber connections to high-performance APs ensure stable, high-bandwidth service for multiple users per room — no bottlenecks, even during peak hours.

• *Simplified Architecture:*
Passive access layer eliminates ELV rooms, reducing space, power, and cabling needs. One-time cabling offers durability and scalability for the next decade.

UPM and Huawei: The World's First Passive Ethernet Network for Higher Education

Setting a Global Benchmark for Smart Campus

UPM's deployment of the Huawei Xingmai PEN solution represents a global benchmark for higher education network transformation. It demonstrates how Malaysia's universities can lead in adopting advanced new all-optical network technologies to enable smarter, greener, and more connected campus environments.

Huawei will continue collaborating with UPM to expand new all-optical innovations across more facilities, including classrooms, laboratories, and libraries — supporting Malaysia's vision of a digital, intelligent, and sustainable education ecosystem.

Future Cities

Tomorrow's Metropolises: Asia Charges Ahead in the Global Smart City Race

By Johan Chairil

IMD 2025 ranks Zurich #1, Shenzhen 50th for AI prowess. Singapore's TeleHealth cuts visits 30%; Shenzhen's 527 AI pilots scale fast. Amsterdam's retrofits slash CO2 20%. Policies: 15-min zoning, MaaS mandates, citizen quotas. Asia leads speed; West equity.

Future Cities

Tomorrow's Metropolises: Asia Charges Ahead in the Global Smart City Race

As urban populations surge toward 68% of the world's total by 2050, cities are harnessing AI, digital twins, and climate-resilient infrastructure to redefine livability. The IMD Smart City Index 2025 crowns Zurich first for blending health, mobility, and governance seamlessly, but Asia led by China's Shenzhen and ASEAN leaders like Singapore surges with pilots that outpace Western models. Europe and the U.S. prioritize citizen-centric equity, while Asia emphasizes rapid scale amid megacity growth, sparking debates on privacy versus efficiency.

IMD's framework splits evaluation into Structures (transit networks, healthcare, green spaces, affordability) and Technology (e-services, smart mobility apps, broadband access). Zurich and Oslo earn AAA ratings through adaptive streetlights slashing energy 70% and real-time traffic AI cutting commutes 25%. Dubai ranks 4th via AI governance; Shenzhen sits at 50th but excels in tech, hosting 2,000+ AI firms and leading China's robotics output. Singapore (9th) balances both, its TeleHealth pilot reducing hospital visits 30% with IoT monitoring.

Image from Freepik

Future Cities

Tomorrow's Metropolises: Asia Charges Ahead in the Global Smart City Race

Asia's pilots scale at unprecedented speed. Shenzhen's "benchmark smart city" initiative rolls out 527 AI scenarios by 2026 from predictive policing to 5G vertiports, driving 20% annual growth and topping Global Innovation Index clusters with Hong Kong-Guangzhou. In ASEAN, Indonesia's Madiun Regency and Malaysia's George Town reached Seoul Smart City Prize 2025 finals for flood sensors and human-centric governance. Contrast Europe's Amsterdam (2009 retrofits yielding 10-20% CO2 cuts across 170 projects) or U.S. SURTRAC in Pittsburgh (25% faster travel): Asia iterates via state-backed models, often leapfrogging regulatory hurdles.

Success demands 2030 policy pivots. Zoning revolutions enforce 15-minute cities, Singapore's polycentric hubs ban sprawl, mirroring EU zero-net-land-take mandates while streamlining approvals for transit-oriented developments.

Future Cities

Tomorrow's Metropolises: Asia Charges Ahead in the Global Smart City Race

Shenzhen imposes building emissions penalties akin to NYC's Local Law 97 (80% cuts by 2050), subsidizing microgrids; Copenhagen legislates peer-to-peer solar for carbon-neutrality. Mobility mandates drive Mobility-as-a-Service (MaaS): Helsinki's platforms inspire Asia's robotaxi pilots, while U.S. zoning battles slow vertiports.

Governance reforms prove crucial. Europe's SynchroniCity standardized IoT across 11 cities, birthing Living-in.EU; Asia requires Vilnius-style 30% citizen input quotas via apps to bridge digital divides, in which Shenzhen's surveillance boosts efficiency but dents IMD governance scores. U.S. pilots like San Jose's digital twins excel in disasters, but siloed agencies hinder scale versus China's "city brains.

Future Cities

Tomorrow's Metropolises: Asia Charges Ahead in the Global Smart City Race

By 2030, Asia's state-capitalism Shenzhen's AI density outstripping Zurich's equity could redefine urbanism, though at privacy's expense. Europe leads inclusivity; America fosters innovation pockets. BloombergNEF projects $1.56 trillion in smart tech by 2025; winners fuse Asia's velocity with Occidental safeguards, transforming pilots into resilient megapolises for billions.

Delight Media

New Trends in Creativity

NEWS

Changi Airport Unveils 'T5 In The Making' Exhibition Showcasing Future Tech and Mega Terminal

SINGAPORE: Visitors can now glimpse the future of air travel at Changi Airport's new exhibition, "T5 In The Making," which opened on January 6 at Terminal 3's arrival hall and runs until March. The immersive showcase across five zones highlights innovations for the upcoming Terminal 5 (T5), set for completion in the mid-2030s. Features include autonomous wheelchairs for seniors and mobility-impaired passengers, robotic arms lifting heavy baggage up to 35kg, self-driving vehicles, and AI systems like Airport 360, already improving on-time performance. Personalised with named "boarding passes," the experience includes a giant animated globe illustrating Asia's aviation growth, land reclamation history, curved-screen visions of greenery-filled spaces, and a detailed T5 scale model comparable in size to Chinatown to Raffles Place. Hands-on activities allow designing digital murals. Managing Director of Changi East, Ong Chee Chiau, said the exhibition aims to excite the public about T5's role in boosting capacity to 140 million passengers annually. egistration is available online for groups of up to five; walk-ins accepted if space permits.

The Cognitive Awakening: 2026's Shift from Connected to "Autonomous" IoT

By 2026, the Internet of Things will no longer just be a network that "collects and sends"—it will be a distributed brain that senses and acts. This shift, termed Cognitive IoT or AIoT, is predicted to be the most impressive development of the year as intelligence migrates directly onto the "Edge" of devices. In smart cities, IoT-driven traffic systems will no longer just report congestion; they will autonomously recalibrate signals in milliseconds to prevent gridlock before it forms. In healthcare, "living" Digital Twins—real-time virtual replicas of patients—will allow doctors to simulate treatment outcomes on a digital "mirror" before a single pill is prescribed. This evolution is powered by a new generation of Edge AI semiconductors capable of local inference, eliminating the lag of cloud processing. Combined with the massive scale of 5G-Advanced networks—projected to reach 5 billion subscriptions by 2026—this "always-on" intelligence will enable everything from self-healing power grids to autonomous warehouse robots that collaborate with human workers in real time.

NEWS

IOT - 5G and City b=Brains

The latest developments in Internet of Things (IoT) and smart cities in China focus on accelerated digital infrastructure construction, the integration of cutting-edge technologies like 5G-Advanced and AI, and the development of comprehensive urban management frameworks known as "city brains". A key news story highlights China's rapid 5G deployment, which is foundational for these initiatives.

News Story from a Chinese Media Source

According to a January 2026 report from the Chinese state-controlled news agency Xinhua News Agency, approximately 40 Chinese tech startups showcased their latest smart home technologies at the world's largest consumer electronics show (CES) in January 2026. The technologies are designed to make homes "not just smarter, but also more intuitive and responsive to human needs". This points to the increasing sophistication and consumer-focused application of IoT in daily life, an important part of the broader smart city ecosystem.

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Future Cities

Malaysia's Smart City: Why KL, Penang, and Johor Bahru Must Go 100% Smart—Now

By Dr Ahmad Zaharuddin Sani

By 2030, over 75 percent of Malaysians will live in urban centres. Yet Kuala Lumpur, Penang, and Johor Bahru are already buckling under the strain of traffic congestion, inefficient public services, and environmental decline. In Kuala Lumpur alone, traffic congestion is estimated to cost between RM20 and RM30 billion annually in lost productivity—roughly 2 to 3 percent of national GDP. Penang's heritage island is becoming increasingly congested and polluted, while Johor Bahru's position as a cross border extension of Singapore exposes stark gaps in transport planning, digital infrastructure, and governance.

Why KL, Penang, and Johor Bahru Must Go 100% Smart—Now

The global context is sobering. While Malaysia debates whether smart cities are "nice to have," cities like Seoul, Singapore, Tallinn, and Barcelona are already earning returns on years of investment in data-driven governance. Against these benchmarks, Malaysia is not just lagging—it is at risk of becoming irrelevant in the regional race for talent, capital, and innovation.

The Big Misunderstanding: What Smart Cities Actually Are

Malaysia often reduces the concept of a smart city to a collection of apps, pilot projects, and "digital tourism" gimmicks. This is a fundamental misreading. In cities like Singapore, Seoul, and Copenhagen, smart systems are not cosmetic; they are infrastructural.

The mismatch is structural. SMEs thrive on agility, innovation, and risk-taking. Banks thrive on stability, predictability, and collateral.

Why KL, Penang, and Johor Bahru Must Go 100% Smart—Now

Singapore uses real-time data to manage traffic flow, utilities, and emergency response. Seoul integrates citizen participation directly into policymaking through its mVoting platform. Barcelona's smart grid saves millions of euros annually through efficient energy distribution. Tallinn runs 99 percent of public services online, with near-zero corruption leakage.

Malaysia's own Smart City Framework launched in 2019 identified six pillars, but implementation has been inconsistent and often superficial. Langkawi's pilot project—once hailed as a prototype for Malaysia's future—never evolved beyond scattered tourism apps and disconnected systems. Its failure is not surprising: no world-class smart city was ever built through isolated pilot projects or branding campaigns.

The Evidence: Smart Cities Produce Real Returns

Smart city advocates are often accused of being techno idealists. But the data is clear.

Why KL, Penang, and Johor Bahru Must Go 100% Smart—Now

- Singapore's smart mobility ecosystem reduces commuting time by an estimated 60 hours per resident per year.
- Barcelona's energy-efficient infrastructure lowers its carbon footprint by 33,000 tonnes annually.
- Seoul's smart safety systems have contributed to a 30 percent reduction in emergency response times.

If Kuala Lumpur achieved even half of these gains, the economic payoff would dwarf the initial investment. This is not aspirational; it is calculable. The World Bank estimates that inefficient urban services cost Southeast Asian economies up to 2 to 5 percent of GDP. Malaysia cannot afford this drag if it aims to remain competitive in the region.

The Price Tag: High, But Lower Than Doing Nothing

Going fully smart will not be cheap. Based on global benchmarks:

- Kuala Lumpur: RM20 to RM25 billion for full integration across mobility, energy, and governance.

Why KL, Penang, and Johor Bahru Must Go 100% Smart—Now

- Penang: RM10 to RM12 billion with a strong emphasis on environmental resilience.
- Johor Bahru: RM12 to RM15 billion due to its cross-border economic role.

These numbers can seem politically explosive, but the alternative—persistent inefficiency—costs more. KL's traffic losses alone could fund a decade of smart city investment. The real question is not whether Malaysia can afford smart cities, but whether it can afford the consequences of delaying them.

Who Pays for the Future?

Smart cities worldwide rely on blended financing models. Singapore's GovTech ecosystem is built on public funding matched with private innovation. Barcelona leverages public-private partnerships for infrastructure rollouts. Shenzhen relies heavily on tech-sector investment.

Why KL, Penang, and Johor Bahru Must Go 100% Smart—Now

Malaysia must do the same. Government should build the foundational infrastructure—broadband, mobility networks, data platforms. Private firms should drive applications, services, and R&D. Citizens will contribute through usage fees for premium services, as seen globally.

More important, blended financing ensures accountability. Governments alone cannot deliver smart cities; nor should they.

The Langkawi Lesson: Malaysia's Wake-Up Call

Langkawi was supposed to be Malaysia's proud smart city prototype. Instead, it became a symbol of underperformance. The problems were predictable:

- Lack of coordination between government agencies
- Over-emphasis on tourism apps with little systemic integration
- Insufficient core infrastructure
- Minimal citizen participation
- No long-term roadmap or measurable KPIs

Why KL, Penang, and Johor Bahru Must Go 100% Smart—Now

In global smart city rankings, integration—not experimentation—is what delivers results. Langkawi did not fail because smart cities are unrealistic. It failed because Malaysia treated the concept as a marketing exercise rather than a structural transformation.

Why Malaysia Must Go 100 Percent Smart

No city becomes smart through fragmented or piecemeal upgrades. Half-smart is simply dumb. Data systems must talk to one another. Mobility must align with energy networks. Public services must be digitised end-to-end. Governance must be transparent and analytics-driven.

KL, Penang, and JB are the nation's economic engines. Together, they drive more than half of Malaysia's GDP. If these three hubs fail to transform, the entire country will fall behind regional competitors.

Meanwhile, Singapore is moving toward a "Digital Twin Nation" strategy.

Why KL, Penang, and Johor Bahru Must Go 100% Smart—Now

Seoul aims for zero carbon by 2050 enabled by smart grids. Shanghai is developing a fully integrated AI urban system by 2035. Malaysia is at risk of becoming the least future-ready among major ASEAN economies.

A Practical Path Forward

Malaysia can still catch up—but only with decisive action.

- Mandate full smart city readiness in KL, Penang, and JB by 2035.
- Establish a national Smart City Investment Fund that binds federal, state, GLC, and private capital into a transparent financing mechanism.
- Prioritise infrastructure first—data platforms, sensors, broadband, public transit—followed by citizen services.
- Develop strict KPIs: congestion reduction targets, energy efficiency metrics, digital service adoption rates, carbon reduction milestones.
- Ensure inclusivity: smart services must benefit all socioeconomic groups, not just affluent urban enclaves.
- Ensure inclusivity: smart services must benefit all socioeconomic groups, not just affluent urban enclaves.

Why KL, Penang, and Johor Bahru Must Go 100% Smart—Now

These steps are neither radical nor experimental. They are in line with what successful smart cities worldwide have already done.

Malaysia's Clock Is Ticking

The smart city agenda is not about futuristic fantasies, flying cars, or tech slogans. It is about economic survival, environmental sustainability, and national competitiveness. KL, Penang, and Johor Bahru must commit to becoming fully smart—100 percent, not 20 percent pilot projects or scattered solutions. Malaysia is running out of time to make the leap.

Langkawi's mistakes must not be repeated. The next wave of smart city development must be bold, data-driven, fully integrated, and centred on citizens—not on marketing brochures.

If Malaysia continues to delay, it will remain stuck—quite literally—in traffic, while the rest of the world accelerates into a smarter, cleaner, and more competitive future.

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Johor Bahru's RTS Link: A Fare-Driven Analysis of Cross-Border Winners

By Johan Chairil

Johor workers (25-45, RM3k-8k income) gain most from RTS fares (~RM5-15 roundtrip). Singaporeans (day-trippers) enjoy leisure perks but less routinely. e-ART revives cancelled IRDA BRT corridors (Skudai-Tebrau-Iskandar Puteri) elevated for RTS feeders. Fares decide adoption.

The Johor Bahru-Singapore Rapid Transit System (RTS Link), slated for end-2026 operations, emerges as a litmus test for economic integration amid currency disparities and labor flows. With fares yet to be finalized but described as "competitive" and "affordable" (with hints of dual-currency equivalence, off-peak discounts, and season passes per operator statements), affordability is expected to crown

RTS Link: A Fare-Driven Analysis of Cross-Border Winners

Malaysian cross-border commuters as the primary beneficiaries.

These workers, predominantly Johor natives aged 25-45 earning in the RM 3,000-8,000 monthly range, stand to reclaim hours lost to Causeway gridlock, transforming grueling 60-90 minute drives into five-minute seamless rides.

Initial daily volumes are projected at around 40,000 passengers upon opening, with capacity for up to 10,000 per hour per direction and potential for higher peak usage, where Malaysians could comprise the majority (estimated 60-70%), as season passes and off-peak discounts target their repetitive work trips in Singapore's factories, clinics, and eateries where SGD wages often double local pay. Fare sensitivity is paramount: if kept under an estimated RM 15 equivalent round-trip (versus RM 50+ for taxis or buses), it could slash 20-30% of typical household transport costs, fueling remittances and JB's property surge near Bukit Chagar station.

RTS Link: A Fare-Driven Analysis of Cross-Border Winners

Singaporeans, by contrast, register as secondary gainers, lured more by leisure than necessity. Affluent day-trippers (household income SGD 8,000+), families, and young urbanites aged 18-55 eye JB's malls like Paradigm and Komtar for 30-50% savings on dining and retail, amplified by the ringgit's depreciation.

Yet, for them, RTS is a convenience upgrade, not a lifeline, competing with domestic MRT efficiency. Surveys and projections suggest 30-40% ridership from this cohort, skewed toward weekends, as higher opportunity costs deter routine use. Businesses in Woodlands benefit indirectly via reduced regional congestion, but individual Singaporeans prioritize novelty over economics; think medical check-ups or Legoland jaunts, not daily staples. Online discussions echo this: locals query if RTS "soaks up" JB's high-rises without reciprocal job pulls, underscoring asymmetric flows favoring Malaysia's labor export dynamics.

RTS Link: A Fare-Driven Analysis of Cross-Border Winners

This demographic tilt underscores RTS's role in Johor's Special Economic Zone ambitions, channeling up to 10,000 passengers per hour per direction into a hub poised for 2.25 million residents by 2035.

Malaysians are poised to capture the core utility on volume and velocity, with faster access to higher SGD salaries sustaining JB's revival, from Forest City rebounds to Iskandar Puteri's Educity boom. Singaporeans amplify spillover: their spending could juice retail (with projected footfall increases of around 20%), but fare thresholds may cap penetration; market analyses suggest adoption could dip if perceived as less competitive.

Policymakers tout co-located CIQ for frictionless swaps, yet pricing that ensures Malaysians aren't priced out remains critical, as hundreds of thousands of daily crossers potentially shift a significant portion (up to 35%) railward.

RTS Link: A Fare-Driven Analysis of Cross-Border Winners

Pivoting to JB's intra-city fabric, the proposed elevated Autonomous Rapid Transit (e-ART) rollout builds on the shelved Iskandar Malaysia Bus Rapid Transit (IMBRT) blueprint along similar corridors: Skudai (north to universities), Tebrau (northeast suburbs), and Iskandar Puteri (west to Senai Airport).

The IMBRT Phase 1, piloted in 2021 but cancelled in 2024 over concerns including traffic interference and capacity limits (under 5,000 pphpd), envisioned ground-level buses at low fares. e-ART elevates this vision with autonomous, rubber-tyred pods on viaducts, targeting higher capacities (estimated 5,000-12,000 pphpd) at affordable per-trip rates (around RM 1-3), with Bukit Chagar interchange in close proximity. Fare parity aims to preserve equity appeal for students and families, while elevation avoids the congestion issues that doomed its predecessor, positioning it as ideal RTS feeders potentially by the late 2020s or early 2030s.

RTS Link: A Fare-Driven Analysis of Cross-Border Winners

In sum, fares will dictate destiny: Malaysians are set to harvest RTS's core utility, embedding JB as a commuter powerhouse, while Singaporeans savor peripheral perks. This duality powers bilateral growth, but equity hinges on competitive thresholds to support the demographics driving high public transit penetration goals. Johor's infrastructure pivot from ground-level BRT to elevated e-ART reinforces this, betting on greater efficiency for sustained SEZ momentum.

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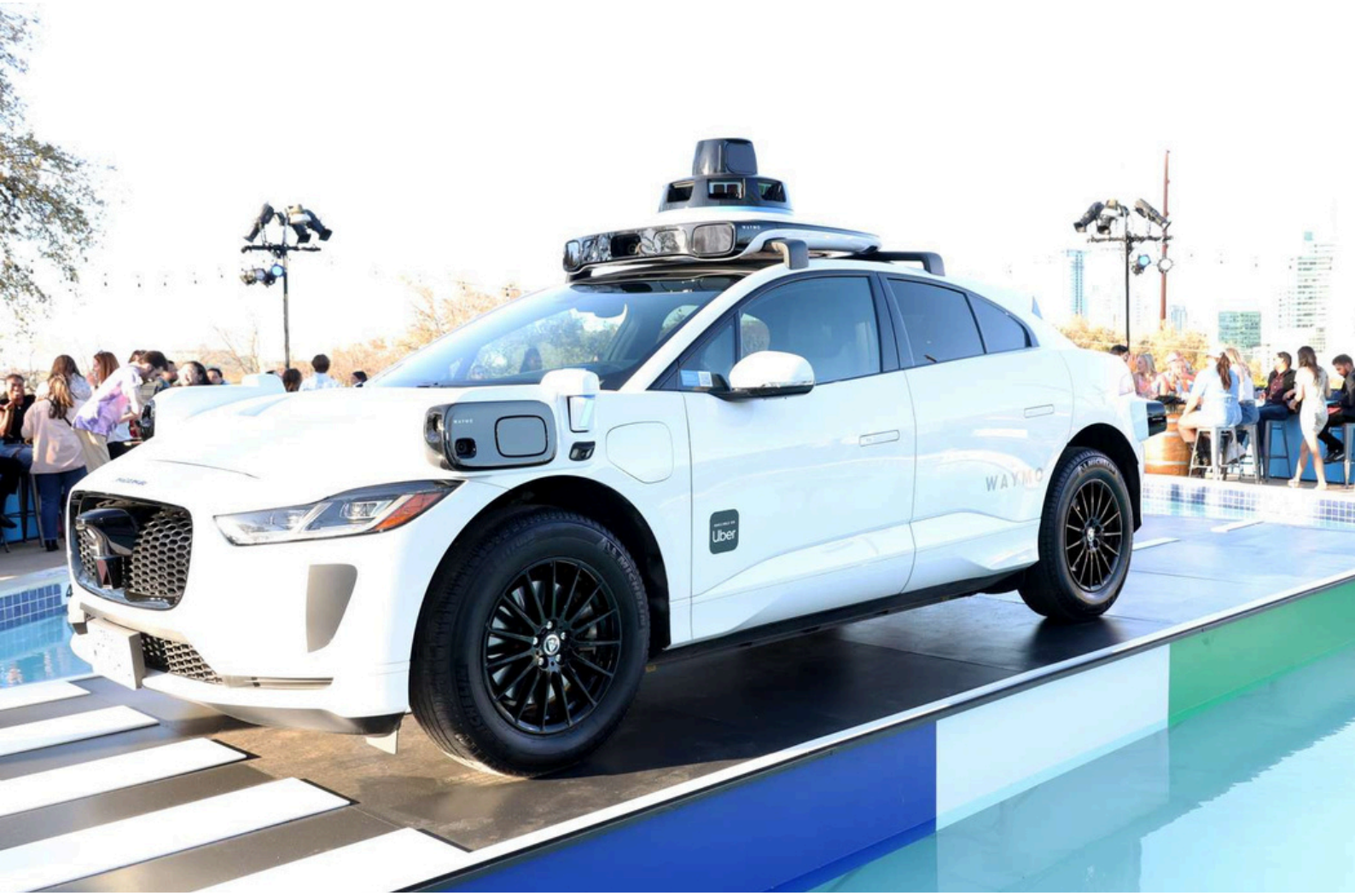
Robotaxis Accelerate Across America in 2025



After years of hype, delays, and setbacks, driverless taxis became a reality on U.S. streets in 2025, with services now available in seven cities—though some still include human safety drivers.

Leading the charge is Google-backed Waymo, which reported over 14 million trips this year, triple the previous total.

Robotaxis Accelerate Across America in 2025

The company expanded to Austin and Atlanta, introduced freeway operations, and plans its first international launch in London. Riders can hail fully driverless Waymo vehicles via its app in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Phoenix, and through Uber partnerships in Atlanta and Austin.

Tesla entered the fray with a June launch in Austin using its Robotaxi app, followed by San Francisco. However, these rides rely on supervised Full Self-Driving technology with safety monitors onboard, and the fleet remains small—around 31 vehicles in Austin amid long wait times. CEO Elon Musk vows fully unsupervised operations soon and aims for rapid growth.

Robots Slash Passport and IC Collection Time to 5 Minutes at Singapore's ICA

SINGAPORE – Collecting a new passport or identity card in Singapore has become significantly faster and more efficient, thanks to robotic automation at the Immigration and Checkpoints Authority's (ICA) new Services Centre.

The Integrated Smart Document Management System (iSMART), launched in July 2025, deploys over 100 disc-shaped robots that retrieve documents from storage shelves and deliver them to self-service kiosks, reducing collection time from 11 minutes to just five.

Previously, manual processes led to long, unpredictable queues and frustration for customers, as officers sifted through storage rooms like searching a library.

Now, after booking an appointment and verifying identity at a kiosk, a robot navigates RFID-guided floors to fetch the documents using a robotic arm.

Larger robots handle bulk transfers and sorting, cutting the need for officers from 20 to five per shift.

Robots Slash Passport and IC Collection Time

Positive feedback was received from the public on speed, while staff are freed from repetitive tasks for more meaningful roles.

Deputy Superintendent Gerald Woo highlighted the system's development over five years, including public pilots, as a rewarding innovation enhancing service delivery.

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