

OVERHEAD MOTORBIKE CROSSING OPENS IN KOTA SAMARAHAN

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Fadillah and Masing (fourth and fifth left, respectively) cut the ribbons to mark the official opening of 'Jambatan Ilmu'. — Photos by Muhammad Rais Sanusi

KOTA SAMARAHAN: Sarawak's first hybrid overhead crossing for both pedestrians and motorcyclists here has been officially opened.

The 'Jambatan Ilmu' (Bridge of Knowledge) located near the entrance of the old campus of Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas) represents the gateway to Kota Samarahan – dubbed the 'Knowledge Town of Sarawak', says Works Minister Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof.

"This bridge is unique because it is the first in Sarawak that caters to both pedestrians and motorcyclists. In fact, there are not many such bridges in Peninsular Malaysia.

"It will serve as the gateway to Samarahan. The design is iconic as it is a reflection of Samarahan as a knowledge town. Hence, it being named 'Jambatan Ilmu'," he said at the official opening of the structure yesterday.

For the record, the project reached completion on June 3 and has been opened to traffic since Aug 4 this year.

Fadillah said solar technology and LED lights had been adopted for the relatively new facility, of which constructed cost was about RM4.5 million.

He pointed out that the bridge could help shorten the travelling distance for motorcyclists by at least 2km.

“A lot of Unimas students live across the street at Taman Desa Ilmu. As this is a busy major street, a lot of accidents have happened.

“Motorcyclists are not allowed to make a U-turn here – they would need to go further up to the roundabout to turn back. With this bridge, the risk of accidents can be reduced.”

Now, motorcyclists from Asajaya do not need to pass Jalan Entingan Roundabout; those coming from Unimas old campus and going to Taman Desa Ilmu do not have to go up to Jalan Datuk Muhammad Musa Roundabout to turn back.

Fadillah said the overhead crossing would later be handed over to Samarahan District Council, as far as maintenance and monitoring were concerned. The minister also encouraged students and local residents to maximise its usage rather than turn it into a gathering spot.

“We hope the bridge would serve its purpose, instead of having people loiter on it. The bridge isn’t a place for you to hang out as this may make other users uncomfortable.”

Meanwhile, Deputy Chief Minister Tan Sri Datuk Amar Dr James Masing said the project demonstrated the government’s commitment and advocacy of road safety.

He hoped road users, especially Unimas students, would take full advantage of the overhead crossing not only to improve traffic flow but also ensure their safety.

Masing, who is also Infrastructure Development and Transportation Minister, advised motorcyclists and pillion riders to wear helmets at all times when on the road, in addition to wearing proper reflective attire when riding at night.

He said it was vital for them to comply with speed limit and never to beat the red lights under the excuse of ‘We’re in a hurry’.

In this regard, he stressed the importance of road users planning their journey ahead and practising road safety without fail.

“I, therefore, implore all of us to make road safety one of our agenda, be it practising road safety or advocating road safety to our family and friends. Bear in mind that there is no reset button in life. Life is precious and we only live once,” Masing said.