

# Najib to launch MRT service today

**ON TRACK:** First phase covering 12 stations to open to public tomorrow

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**M**ALAYSIANS will be able to enjoy the most convenient way to zip around Klang Valley, in particular the Greater Kuala Lumpur area, with the launch of the first phase of the Klang Valley Mass Rapid Transit Sungai Buloh-Kajang Line (MRT SBK).

With the launch, commuters can look forward to travelling from Sungai Buloh to Semantan in 30 minutes.

The first phase, which covers 12 stations, will be launched by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak at Kwasa Damansara MRT station today.

The service will be open to the public tomorrow.

Land Public Transport Commission (SPAD) chief executive officer Mohd Azharuddin Mat Sah said the 51km-long rail network, which will include 31 stations by July next year, would be complemented by 300 feeder buses.

He said the MRT stations were within walking distance for most commuters, thanks to improved first- and last-mile connectivity.

This, he said, meant that the new MRT SBK line, compared with other rail networks, was located closer to where Malaysians worked and lived.

"In improving the accessibility of the rail network to commuters, a feeder bus will only take 10 minutes to arrive during peak hours between 7am and 9am, and 20 minutes dur-

ing off-peak hours.

"We also estimate that 30 per cent of commuters will use Uber and taxis to move about. There will also be 14 park-and-ride facilities conveniently located around MRT stations to help motorists reduce travelling costs and time," he said, adding that commuters who parked their cars at the facilities would be charged only RM4 per entry.

The train frequency during peak hours was about 2.5 minutes, and 3.5 minutes during off-peak hours.

Each train set serving the line, he said, would have four cars, which could ferry 1,200 passengers.

The daily ridership is estimated to be about 400,000 passengers, while train operation hours are from 6am to midnight daily.

Azharuddin said SPAD was developing an app called Journey Planner, which offers a wide range of real time information for all modes of public transportation.

"The app, which is expected to be launched in the second quarter of next year, will empower commuters and motorists to make informed decisions and better plan their journeys," Azharuddin said.

He said the Klang Valley Mass Rapid Transit project, which was approved in December 2010, would see the construction of three MRT lines.

"It is testament to the government's commitment to improve

public transportation and enable people to travel comfortably, conveniently and safely.

"The benefits of public transport are irrefutable. It translates into greater connectivity and productivity, which in turn increases economic growth.

"It will also reduce the number of vehicles on the road, which results in lower carbon emissions and a cleaner environment."

Malaysian Retail Chain Association president Datuk Garry Chua

said the MRT line would create a multiplier effect for businesses operating around the rail network.

"The MRT is one of the best things that could happen as it will create more business opportunities for operators. With better connectivity, more people will be able to visit shopping malls and businesses. This will bring in more investors."

Chua said the MRT SBK line would benefit the nation and the people as it would create a seamless travel experience for consumers.

Among the commercial areas and shopping malls that would be covered by the MRT lines are Damansara Sentral, Sunway Giza, The Curve and Utama Shopping Centre.

Public Transport Users Association president Ajit Johl, meanwhile, praised Prasarana Malaysia Bhd for charging commuters only RM1 per trip on the feeder buses.

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New Straits Times, Local News

Date: 15 December 2016

"We are also grateful to the government for ensuring the project was completed on time and for making public transport one of its priorities.

"We look forward to the completion of the line and more public transport infrastructure.

"And, while the focus has been on the Klang Valley, we hope the government does not neglect other developing states like Penang, Johor and Perak."

## Commuters excited about convenient travel via MRT

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The wait for the Klang Valley Mass Rapid Transit Sungai Buloh-Kajang Line (MRT SBK) will soon be over for commuters.

Commuters are excited as the first phase of the MRT line, which covers 12 stations between Sungai Buloh and Semantan, will become fully operational tomorrow.

Tan Jee Yee, 29, said he was excited about the project as the Kajang station was near his house.

"It will be convenient. I am all for better and wider public transport coverage after having been to cities that offer efficient transport. While it will not discourage me from driving, I believe the MRT will make me use public transport more."

Tan said he was concerned about how well the MRT would be operated and the cost.

"It is not that I am averse to taking public transport, but the light rail transit and KTM have issues with efficiency. If the MRT can have the frequency and train length like the ones in Taipei, Taiwan, and Singapore, that would be great."

Azzeraf Azmin, 31, said due to her work, she travelled a lot and needed to drive. She said she was looking forward to the opening of the MRT line, hoping it would ease traffic congestion, especially in Taman Tun Dr Ismail (TTDI).

"I avoid TTDI and take the Penchala Link, where I have to pay toll. Now, on my days off, I can go into the city using the MRT as I do not have to drive."

Qishin Tariq, 28, said he had a countdown for the MRT SBK Line launch.

"There are stops in Cheras close to my house, and Phileo Damansara station is about 500m from my office. My concern is the parking facilities at the MRT stations and traf-

fic at the car park, since I would have to drive there to take the MRT."

Sherryyna Jamil, 28, said she was excited about the new line and would use it frequently.

"Hopefully, the MRT will result in fewer cars in the Klang Valley."

The second phase of the MRT project covers 19 stations between Semantan and Kajang, which is scheduled to be completed in July next year.

It was reported that the fares for the MRT SBK Line would range from RM1 for a single stop, based on the cashless fare structure, to RM6.40.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak will launch the first phase of the MRT SBK Line today at Kwasa Damansara MRT station.



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