

Liow : SBK line a major milestone

KUALA LUMPUR: The fully-operational status of the Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) Line 1, or Sungai Buloh-Kajang (SBK) Line, is a significant milestone in the Government's continuous effort to improve the urban public transportation network in the Klang Valley.

Transport Minister Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai said the second phase of the SBK Line, which opened yesterday, will provide better accessibility to commuters along the route.

"With 31 stations, seven of which are underground, the line is expected to see an average of 150,000 passengers a day from the current 15,000 passengers once the Semantan-Kajang route is fully operational," he said yesterday.

Each train on the 51km SBK line will have four cars, allowing a total capacity of 1,200 passengers per trip running at a frequency of 3.5 minutes.

This translates to a total daily ridership of about 400,000. The line will run underground for 9.5km with the Tun Razak Exchange (TRX) Station being the deepest, 45m below street level, while the rest of the alignment is elevated.

Liow said the first phase of the line, running from Sungai Buloh to Semantan, recorded two million passengers since it began operations in December.

He believed the ridership would "increase tremendously" with the full operation of the line. "This is in keeping with my ministry's continuous efforts to reduce congestion on roads as we expect to see a drop of at least 160,000 vehicles daily," he said.

He added that the MRT is part of the country's ongoing efforts to increase the usage of public transportation, in addition to the existing GO KL free bus services, the Sunway Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), the LRT Extension Project, the future LRT3, and MRT Line 2 projects.

He added that the current initiatives have increased the modal share of urban public transportation from 10% in 2009 to 20% in 2015, and are well on track to achieve the 40% target by 2030.

"This line is designed to ensure that there is robust integration with existing and future public transportation services such as the LRT, LRT3, MRT2 and KTM.

"These interchanges will provide a holistic integrated network of land public transport to the rakyat," Liow said. More than half a million MRT, LRT, monorail and BRT Rapid KL commuters will enjoy a 50% discount on their fares starting today until National Day on Aug 31.

Rapid Rail Sdn Bhd CEO Datuk Zohari Sulaiman said the company is in the midst of streamlining fares across its services. The SBK route was open to the public from 4pm yesterday.

Commuters were given free rides from 4pm to 11.30pm from the Kajang to Muzium Negara stations. Zohari said more than 1,200 Rapid Rail personnel would be on duty to

welcome commuters, expected to be 10 times more than the previous volume.

Rapid Rail has also renovated several main stations, such as the KL Sentral LRT station, to cope with the expected increase. "The east wing of the station has been renovated and is fully open to the public now, as a second entrance.

It has also been equipped with a customer service office, 17 electronic gates, four escalators, CCTV, 11 machines selling tokens, Touch 'n Go reload services, and MyRapid card replacement counters," Zohari said in a statement.

He said MyRapid cardholders can now upgrade to MyRapid Touch 'n Go cards for free at LRT, BRT and monorail stations until July 31. Senior citizens, concession cardholders, the disabled and students may replace their MyRapid concession cards with new ones at the Subang Jaya, Awan Besar and Sri Rampai LRT stations from 7am to 7pm daily.

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