

MRT Corp in advanced stages of planning relocation of utilities

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Buloh-Kajang (SBK) alignment has 31 stations pencilled in, including Sungai Buloh, Kota Damansara, Pusat Bandar Damansara, Pasar Seni, Maluri, Bandar Tun Hussein Onn and Bandar Kajang.

The SBK line will be mostly elevated except for an underground portion running through the city centre from Semantan to Maluri.

The second MRT line is slated to be a circle line serving the inner city, connecting existing high density areas and proposed developments. The third MRT line will serve the northwest to southeast regions outside Kuala Lumpur by connecting areas like Kepong, Selayang and Klang.

Azhar stressed that the alignments for the next two MRT lines have not been finalised. The aim is to ensure that public transport service will be available to a large proportion of Kuala Lumpur and Klang Valley residents.

"What we want to do is to make sure we capture the popular catchment areas, make sure we hit the spots where it brings maximum benefit to the area," he said.

Azhar said the SBK line is expected to start operation in two phases. Phase 1 — a 20.5km stretch from Sungai Buloh to Semantan — is slated to carry its first passengers in December 2016. Phase 2 — the 30.5km portion from Semantan to Kajang — will commence six months later in July 2017.

As Azhar sees it, MRT Corp's challenge is to stand in the present day and conceive a product that will be fresh when the MRT is delivered for public use at the end of 2016. One example Azhar cites is to ensure telecommunications connectivity inside the carriages and tunnels.

He said MRT Corp is in the advanced stages of planning the relocation of utilities. Underground

utility structures such as water pipes and communications cables must be moved out of the way of the construction of the MRT.

Azhar said construction of the SBK line will begin simultaneously at both ends of the alignment, Sungai Buloh and Kajang, and will meet in the middle in the Maluri area.

MRT Corp expects to award most of the 19 construction packages for the SBK line by the end of the year, having already awarded two packages, Azhar said.

On Jan 26, MRT Corp announced the awards of two construction packages for the SBK line worth a total of RM1.738 billion.

The first package, worth RM974 million, was awarded to IJM Construction Sdn Bhd, a unit of IJM Corp Bhd, for the construction of the viaduct guideway and associated works from the Maluri Portal to the Plaza Phoenix station.

A second package, worth RM764 million, was awarded to Ahmad Zaki Sdn Bhd, which is controlled by Ahmad Zaki Resources Bhd, for the construction of the viaduct guideway and associated works from Plaza Phoenix to the Bandar Tun Hussein Onn station.

The most keenly watched award will be the tunnelling portion of the SBK line, which has also attracted a bid from the MRT's project delivery partner, MMC-Gamuda Joint Venture Sdn Bhd. Another interested party for the tunnelling job is said to be a joint venture involving a South Korean company.

Azhar said the award of the tunnelling package could be firmed up and announced by April or May.

MRT Corp is evaluating the bids for the tunnelling package and will submit the proposals to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak, who chairs the tender committee, Azhar said.



Azhar: Unless people know there will be public transport going to an area, they cannot plan

MRT Corp plans next two lines

It will appoint external consultants to draw up proposals by the year-end

by **Chua Sue-Ann**
FD@bizedge.com

KUALA LUMPUR: With work on the mass rapid transit system's (MRT) first line getting into gear, MRT Corp Sdn Bhd is beginning to draw up plans for the next two lines. These will form the bulk of the most costly infrastructure project the country has ever embarked on.

MRT Corp CEO Datuk Azhar Abdul Hamid told *The Edge Finan-*

cial Daily yesterday that the priority now is to prepare proposals for the second and third MRT lines by the end of the year.

The government-linked company set up to implement the massive project will need to appoint external consultants to draw up proposals for the two alignments and make submissions to the Land Public Transport Commission (SPAD), the regulator of public transport.

Azhar said the board of MRT

Corp has given his team guidance in terms of selecting the consultants to work on the proposals, adding that MRT Corp is looking to carry out the planning "as quickly as possible".

"Until and unless we firm all these up, the certainty is not there. People want to know because they are going to make big decisions like where to buy a house, and where to conduct their businesses.

"It goes back to the saying, 'de-

velopment goes where transport goes. Unless people know there will be public transport going to an area, they cannot plan. You are putting the economy on hold, which is no good," said Azhar, who was handpicked to lead the MRT project manager.

SPAD finalised the alignment for the first MRT line last year. It will serve the Sungai Buloh to Kajang areas. The 51km-long Sungai

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