

My money's on reliable trains

THE news of MRT Corp receiving bids to supply rolling stock for its Sungai Buloh-Kajang route caught my eye. It was reported that three companies submitted their bids, namely Changchun Railway Vehicles Co Ltd, Siemens SMH Rail Consortium and CSR Zhuzhou Electric Locomotive Co Ltd.

It has to be highlighted that CSR Zhuzhou Electric Locomotive Co supplied the 38 units of six-car train sets for KTM Komuter worth RM1.9 billion.

I commute daily by KTM Komuter and I have reservations about the reliability of the new train sets. I have no doubt that the new trains have reduced congestion and waiting time for commuters. But I'm concerned about their long-term reliability. There have been a few instances of the new trains breaking down.

I have experienced cancellations caused by breakdowns of these new trains. There was a case in April where a train came to a halt leaving about 500 passengers stranded. I have also seen one of these trains being towed by a diesel locomotive during the evening rush hour.

These trains are meant to be used for a long time, but if they start to have problems barely a year into service, something must be wrong. Reliable trains are a key element of an effective public transport system. Otherwise, delays will occur frequently. We don't want MRT Corp to spend RM1.6 billion for new rolling stock and at the end of the day, spend even more money to repair and maintain them.

I urge MRT Corp to take heed and learn from KTM Komuter's experience. We need reliable products.

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