

Project deadline will be met, says MRT Corp

MRT Corp allays concerns over labour issue, saying KVMRT project on schedule

by JOHN GILBERT

THE developer and asset owner of the Klang Valley Mass Rapid Transit (KVMRT) project has allayed concerns of its project partners problem in getting adequate workforce and has expressed confidence that the partners will be able to complete the KVMRT's 2017 operational deadline.

Mass Rapid Transit Corp Sdn Bhd (MRT Corp) CEO Datuk Azhar Abdul Hamid said at present, MRT Corp contractors have between 4,000 and 5,000 workers and the numbers are



Pic by Hafzi Mohamed

MRT Corp contractors have between 4,000 and 5,000 workers and the numbers are expected to gradually triple in size beginning early next year, says Azhar

expected to gradually triple in size beginning early next year.

"One of our biggest challenges is to have enough skilled labour, and in addressing this shortage, we will work with our contractors and gradually bring in between 12,000 and 13,000 (workers) according to their job scope from next year to 2015, as the KVMRT project enters (its) peak development phase," he told *The Malaysian Reserve* in an interview recently.

He said currently the KVMRT is at 22% completion and the right time for the workers to come in is when the project reaches above 50%, stressing that the project is moving on schedule despite the labour challenges.

"As the project builds up, for example as the MRT stations are being built, systems and testing will be ongoing, there will be a lot more people

SEE P4 COL1

More skilled workers involved in the job

FROM P1 MRT Corp

involved. "For now, we are adequate in workforce supply and we do not foresee any shortcomings in obtaining foreign workers," he said, adding the peak batch of workers will be strategically placed and sustained within the company for timely deployment once the MRT Line 2 and 3 projects kick-in.

Azhar said project partners are doing their utmost best in obtaining the right skilled workers with the aim of meeting the MRT project deadline, however, he does see an issue with the current procedure in getting foreign workers.

In getting skilled foreign labour, many MRT contractors, like the construction industry at large, are facing serious foreign labour shortage, a problem they say lies in the long application processes currently in force by relevant government agencies namely the Human Resource Ministry, Ministry of Home Affairs and the Construction Industry Development Board.

Taking this issue to a greater awareness level, the Master Builders Association Malaysia (MBAM) made a strong call to the relevant government agencies to review the current procedure for the application of foreign skilled labours as the current system and labour shortage are effecting the delivery time of construction projects.

Its president Matthew Tee Kai Woon said currently, the

process from application to the arrival of foreign workers to construction sites takes about eight months, a process he said was too long and drastically effects construction companies in their project deadline.

According to MBAM, a substantial number of construction companies are facing late delivery charges and it strongly urges various government agencies to improvise the system to be more efficient and less time-consuming.

In an aim to enhance the living and working conditions of foreign workers in Malaysia, MRT Corp recently invited labour attachés of different countries to Cheras centralised labour quarters (CLQs) to witness for themselves the living environment and facilities provided at these quarters.

The CLQs, which are also located at Sungai Buloh, Cochrane and Kajang, are built with convenient facilities with modern security features.

The highlight of the visit was to provide the living conditions and facilities of the CLQs where embassy representatives were able to view the living conditions for the workers.

Azhar said visits like this will give reassurance to labour attachés about the condition of workers and hoped that MRT Corp's efforts will be emulated for all other major construction projects in the country and the relevant government authorities will take this as a consideration to be imposed as a requirement.