

A place to call home

New centralised labour quarters open in Cochrane for MRT tunnellers

By **SHALINI RAVINDRAN**

shaliniravindran@thestar.com.my

Photo by **SHAHRUL FAZRY**

FOR the workers carrying out underground and tunnelling works for the Sungai Buloh-Kajang MRT project, a hard day's work does not end with going home to dingy, ramshackled construction workers' quarters.

Instead, they now head home to the brand new Centralised Labour Quarters (CLQ) in Cochrane, Kuala Lumpur which was officially opened recently.

The RM10mil facility was constructed by MMC Gamuda KVMRT (T) Sdn Bhd (MGKT), the main contractor for the Klang Valley Mass Rapid Transit (KVMRT) Underground and Tunnelling works, with a construction period of 10 months.

Measuring approximately 0.26ha in land area, the CLQ in Cochrane has four main blocks with 54 rooms and a sub-block consisting of nine rooms.

In total, there are 225 rooms with the capacity to house 1,800 workers.

There are four CLQs located in Cochrane, Sungai Buloh, Cheras and Kajang.

MGKT project director Satpal S. Bhogal said the facility was testament of MGKT's commitment

towards providing comfortable living quarters and other facilities for its workers.

"This set-up is a private initiative to support the Underground and Tunnelling work package contract.

"We are now in a different era where a decent living standard is not a luxury but a necessity for better returns and as employers, we have a moral obligation to ensure the provisions meet their needs.

"Our initiative is aimed at providing our workers with a living environment that is both comfortable and conducive," Satpal said.

He said about RM5mil has also been allocated to maintain the facility and its infrastructure until 2017, when the project is due to be completed.

At present, 804 workers are occupying the quarters in Cochrane, with 354 Malaysians, 214 Bangladeshis, 116 Nepalese, 78 Chinese, 19 Indians and the remaining from Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia and Egypt.

"More workers are expected to arrive in batches soon to meet the underground and tunnelling works demand which will peak over the next few months," Satpal said.

Each room at the CLQ can accommodate up to eight people and come equipped with double-deck beds, lockers and air-conditioning system.

Facilities such as kitchen and drinking water sanitation, common toilets and bath areas, washing area, garbage disposal, medical clinic with in-house doctor, convenience store, hair salon, laundry service, cafeteria and surau are also provided.

The CLQ is also equipped with closed-circuit television cameras (CCTV) and a facial recognition turnstile system to monitor the workers' movement with 24-hours surveillance by security guards.

MGKT was awarded the underground works of the KVMRT Sungai Buloh-Kajang (SBK) Line in March 2012 for the design, construction and completion of the underground works between the Semantan North Portal and Maluri South Portal of the SBK line.

The underground works, costing RM8.28bil, include the construction of tunnels, stations and associated structures along the 9.5km route.



New start: (From right) MGKT head of plant and machinery and store Hong Fook Main, Satpal, MGKT project manager Gustav Klados and CLQ manager V. Visvanathan (left) during the opening of the new CLQ.