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- MRT Corporation CEO Datuk Seri Shahril Mokhtar

MRT project on track, seven of eight tunnels ready

KUALA LUMPUR — All but one underground tunnel for the Klang Valley Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) project are complete and ready for track work, MRT Corporation Sdn Bhd said yesterday.

Its newly appointed chief executive officer, Datuk Seri Shahril Mokhtar, said overall progress of the project was about 58.5 per cent, while underground work and construction of elevated sections were at 73.0 per cent and 49.2 per cent, respectively.

"So as promised, I am confident we will be able to achieve phase one by December 2016, which is from Sungai Buloh until Semantan station, and phase two, the rest of the line, in July 2017," he told reporters after a media site visit of the tunnel from the Cochrane station to the Tun Razak Exchange station.

According to project director Marcus Karakashian, seven out of eight tunnels have been completed, except the one between the Pasar Seni and Stadium Merdeka stations.

The tunnel visited by the media yesterday leads up to the five-storey Tun Razak Exchange station, and is 250m long, 41m wide and at a depth of 45m, the deepest of the seven.

According to Karakashian, it is specifically designed to be the interchange station for proposed Line 2, the MRT Sungai Buloh-Serdang-Putrajaya line.

He said the mega project had reached a crucial phase where the system works could begin, which included the laying of railway tracks for the line, the purchasing and commissioning of trains, installation of the power supply for the trains, signalling, communications, and others.

On the operations side, Shahril said although the business model between MRT Corp and operator Rapid Rail Sdn Bhd, a subsidiary of Prasarana Negara Berhad, was still being ironed out, it has been decided that MRT Corp would handle the ancillary revenue streams including retail and advertising while Rapid Rail would be in charge of operations.

As for the Line 2 of the MRT line, he said the Land Public Transport Commission (SPAD) had in December given the conditional approval and there would be a public display of the proposed alignment during the second quarter of this year.

Shahril inspects the construction work at the Cochrane MRT station in Jalan Shelly, Kuala Lumpur, yesterday. — Picture by Yusof Mat Isa