

MRT may expand to other cities

TRANSPORT SOLUTION: Population growth will spur urban rail development

SHAREN KAUR
KUALA LUMPUR

sharen@mediaprima.com.my

THE mass rapid transit (MRT) project will likely expand outside of Klang Valley when other cities start considering urban rail to cater to the growing population.

“Cities in Malaysia will continue to grow. Already you are seeing traffic jams in Penang and Johor Baru.

“Penang is talking about urban rail as a solution for its traffic problems,” Mass Rapid Transit Corp (MRT Corp) Sdn Bhd chief executive officer Datuk Sri Shahril Mokhtar told Business Times.

“When the opportunity presents itself, I am sure our experience and track record in developing the MRT in the Klang Valley will be viewed positively,” said Shahril, whose contract has been extended by two years until December 31 2018.

The Penang government plans to build a light rail transit (LRT) and MRT lines across the state, including the mainland and several new roads to link George Town and Butterworth.

The project is part of the RM27 billion Penang Transport Master Plan.

Johor is also planning a cross-border MRT project with Singapore, which is expected to be completed



A fivefold increase in rail ridership is expected with the new Klang Valley mass rapid transit network, which is in line with the government's target to increase public transport usage. Pic by Saddam Yusoff

by 2020 the earliest.

The MRT project, first announced by Singapore and Malaysia in May 2010, is to lengthen the Thomson-East Coast Line up to Johor Baru, with the station located at JB Sentral.

Ongoing MRT projects in Malaysia is the Klang Valley MRT, which comprises three lines — Sungai Buloh-Kajang (SBK Line), Sungai Buloh-Serdang-Putrajaya (SSP Line) and

Line 3 (Circle Line around Kuala Lumpur city).

A fivefold increase in rail ridership is expected with the new MRT network, which is in line with the government's target to increase public transport usage in the Klang Valley to 40 per cent by 2020.

The government, via Minister of Finance Inc, owns 100 per cent of MRT Corp, which is the developer and owner of the Klang Valley MRT

project.

Meanwhile, MRT Corp chairman Tan Sri Dr Ali Hamsa said in a statement yesterday the government extended Shahril's contract by two years to ensure the timely delivery of the Klang Valley MRT project.

Ali, who is also chief secretary to the government, said Shahril's good leadership of MRT Corp was an asset during the critical period when the first MRT Line (SBK Line) was about to become operational.

“The government has decided that Shahril's continued leadership of MRT Corp was needed to see both phases of the SBK Line become operational in December and July next year.”

Shahril took over the helm of MRT Corp on January 1 last year. Prior to that, he was group managing director of Prasarana Malaysia Bhd.

Mass Rapid Transit Corp Sdn Bhd chief executive officer
Datuk Sri Shahril Mokhtar

