

# MRT's first day of operations sees happy commuters

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Early morning commuters on the first day of operations for the Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) Sungai Buloh-Kajang (SBK) Line described the project as the future of public transportation.

They applauded the MRT service and said it would help reduce road congestion and cut the cost of living.

Commuters were seen snapping pictures and taking selfies as early as 6am in their excitement to try out the new service.

United Nations programme officer Paul Soo said he felt the MRT was just a glimpse of what Malaysians could expect in future.

"The MRT is just a stepping stone, and with more projects, the nation's public transportation and connectivity will improve drastically."

Soo said he would be able to save on fuel and parking fees by taking the MRT.

"I usually drive to work. Sometimes, I get caught in traffic and also have to pay for parking. But, I think I

will take the MRT more often now."

For Nurmillia Tina Najjini, 25, the MRT is a way to bridge the gap between communities.

"As a Malaysian, I am really proud of the MRT," said the administrative assistant at Kenanga Investment Bank Bhd, who said the MRT was economical and could help reduce the cost of living, as she spent more than RM5 per day to get to work previously.

Another commuter, Halimah Jamaluddin, 33, said previously, she had to pay for parking fees and left home early to avoid the traffic.

"Now, I don't have to worry about parking fees or traffic, or worse, getting parking tickets. The MRT is simply the smart choice," said the Malaysia Building Society Bhd officer, adding that it was a comfortable ride.

Sabahan Mohd Nisran, 59, said the service would help him save more.

"With fares as low as RM1.10, I can save more," said the Help University employee.

Another commuter, Muharizan Mohd, 46, said the government should keep the fares low, just like how it was in Europe and other parts of the world.

"The government is doing the right thing with the MRT, but make sure the fare doesn't burden the rakyat," he said, adding that he hoped such projects could take place in other parts of the country.

Engineer Ng Yong Han, 30, said he was excited to ride on the train as an alternative to driving to work.

"The stations are near to places which I frequent, such as IUtama, Ikea, the Curve and around the Kota Damansara area.

"It will save lot of my time compared to driving. I can also avoid tolls and parking fees."

Business development manager Zain Azlan Khalid, 40, said he brought his family to try the MRT as

he wanted his children to be familiar with public transportation.

"As someone who is working in the city, I rely more on public transportation. The cost is much cheaper than driving. The good thing is that we can save on fuel and avoid traffic jams around the city.

"I really like the design of the train. Not only is it user-friendly and spacious, the height of the platform screen doors is welcomed," said Zain, who was travelling from Kota Damansara.

Liew Jieh Wei, 14, said he was eager to take the MRT to school as it was near his

home in Sungai Buloh.

"It will be convenient for me to go to school as the station is nearby. With feeder buses available here, I can also use them to reach home," he said, when met with his family on their way to Bandar Utama.

MRT transit officer Hidayatul



**Hidayatul  
Amirul  
Wahid**

Amirul Wahid, 23, said most of the commuters were families who took the opportunity to enjoy free rides and go out during the school holidays. He said they expected more people to try the MRT service during the weekend.

He said for the first five months, an officer would be on board each train to assist commuters.

MRT rides and the feeder buses are free of charge until Jan 16.

The MRT service was launched by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak on Thursday.

Phase One covers 21km of the northern elevated section of the SBK Line, which includes 12 stations between Sungai Buloh and Semantan.

Mass Rapid Transit Corporation Sdn Bhd (MRT Corp) project director Marcus Karakashian said all operations of the SBK Line would be handled by Prasarana Malaysia Bhd's subsidiary, Rapid Rail Sdn Bhd, including timetabling, fares, ticketing and customer service. **Reporting by Sameer Ahmed Shaikh and Balqis Lim**