

Stations to get more bicycle racks

CYCLIST-FRIENDLY:

Passengers can bring foldable bikes on carriages, says Prasarana CEO

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DUE to overwhelming feedback from the public, Rapid Rail Sdn Bhd will provide more bicycle racks at Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) stations to encourage the public to cycle and use the MRT.

Prasarana Group Bhd president and chief executive officer Datuk Seri Azmi Abdul Aziz said the public was allowed to bring their foldable bicycles into MRT train carriages during off-peak hours.

However, Azmi said full-size bicycles or motorised personal transporters, such as Segways, were not allowed into the coaches.

"A bicycle is considered a (form of) public transport, while cycling is a healthy activity that is being encouraged by the government," he said after checking first-day operations of the first phase of the MRT Sungai Buloh-Kajang (SBK) Line here yesterday.

Present was Rapid Rail Sdn Bhd chief executive officer Datuk

Zohari Sulaiman.

Rapid Rail Sdn Bhd, a subsidiary of Prasarana Malaysia Bhd, was appointed operator of the SBK Line.

On the first day of the line's operations, Azmi said ridership was encouraging, and was expected to increase during the weekends and after the school holidays ended next month.

He was confident that ridership would increase to about 160,000 daily next month.

"Based on our experience, the number of passengers will increase gradually when more people have tried and are satisfied with the MRT and its feeder bus services," he said.

Azmi said Rapid Rail might extend the MRT service past midnight if there was strong demand for it in the future.

He gave his assurance that the maintenance of the MRT system would follow international standards to minimise disruption and inconvenience to the public.

"It underwent six months of testing and commissioning while

the trial runs took three months," he said.

The first phase of the SBK Line was launched by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak at the Kwasa Damansara station near Sungai Buloh on Thursday.

Najib announced that the public could enjoy the MRT service and its feeder bus services for free for a month until Jan 16.



Datuk Seri Azmi Abdul Aziz



The bicycle racks at the Pusat Bandar Damansara Mass Rapid Transit station in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. Pic by Sairien Nafis

He said it was a New Year's gift to the people, besides giving them the opportunity to try the new, modern and efficient public transportation facility.

The RM21 billion MRT SBK Line, which covers 51km and has 31 stations, is part of Economic Trans-

formation Programme projects initiated by Najib.

Phase one covers 21km of the SBK Line's northern elevated section, which includes 12 stations between Sungai Buloh and Semantan station in Bukit Damansara.

The second phase, from Seman-

tan station to Kajang station, will be operational by July.

Page 1 pic: People waiting to ride the Mass Rapid Transit train for the very first time at the Semantan MRT station in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.