Najib, Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor and their blogger friends enjoy their ride on the MRT Sungai Buloh-Kajang line. — Picture from www.najibrazak.com

END TO JAMS?

Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) Sungai Buloh-Kajang 51km Line, operational Monday, is expected to reduce vehicles entering Klang Valley by 160,000 from 400,000.

- Per trip: RM5.50 (Touch N' Go), RM6.40 cash.
- Travel time: 80 minutes
- Trains: 3.5 min frequency

See pages 4 & 5

"To all those involved, I am proud of all of you. This is the product of your sweat and tears!

— Najib

'Expect less traffic congestion'

KUALA LUMPUR — Mass Rapid Transit Corp (MRT Corp) has projected a drop of 160,000 vehicles entering the city daily when its Sungai Buloh-Kajang (SBK) line comes into full operation starting July 17.

Its Strategic Communication and Stakeholder Relation director, Datuk Najmuddin Abdullah is optimistic the MRT service for the SBK line would reduce the number of vehicles entering the city.

He estimated a drop of about 160,000 vehicles daily if 400,000 people were to use the MRT service every day.

"One MRT train with four cars can carry 1,200 people comfortably. Imagine the space needed for 1,200 cars on the road that alone will create a traffic jam.

"But if these 1,200 users leave their cars at home and take the train, imagine the space that can be 'emptied' on the road and we can save a lot of the by product from that space saving," he told Bernama.

He said since the first phase of the SBK line, covering 21km from Sungai Buloh to Semantan, came into operation in December last year, MRT recorded nearly two million people having used the service.

Najmuddin said MRT had even built 14 multi-storey and open-air car parks with 8,000 bays at several stations along the 51km SBK Line to encourage more people to take the train to the city.

In addition, he said, there would be 300 feeder buses, each with a capacity of 62 passengers, to shuttle people to the nearest station at a frequency of 10 minutes.

"Rapid Rail, the MRT operator, has forecasted an increase in ten-fold in the number of users in the coming months, from an average of 15,000 passengers a day to 150,000 passengers once we open phase two from Semantan to Kajang," he added.

"One MRT train with four cars can carry 1,200 people comfortably. Imagine the space needed for 1,200 cars on the road that alone will create a traffic jam."

– Datuk Najmuddin Abdullah

He said another factor which would encourage the public to commute using the MRT was the reasonable and affordable fares.

For instance, he said, a trip from Sungai Buloh to Kajang would only cost RM5.50 by Touch N' Go and RM6.40 for cash payments and its travel time is about 80 minutes.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak will launch the second phase of the SBK line on Monday, allowing the train to run the entire 51km alignment from Sungai Buloh to Kajang.

The second phase will consists of 19 stations, of which seven are located underground.

The 19 stations are at Muzium Negara, Pasar Seni, Bukit Bintang, Tun Razak Exchange Centre, Maluri, Cochrane, Taman Pertama, Taman Midah, Taman Connaught, Taman Mutiara, Suntex, Sri Raya, Bandar Tun Hussein Onn, Batu Sebelas Cheras, Bukit Dukung, Sungai Jernih, Merdeka, Stadium Kajang, and Kajang station. — Bernama

An MRT train in a test run in a tunnel heading for an underground station. — Pictures by Azneal Ishak

Najib's seal of approval

KUALA LUMPUR — Datuk Seri Najib Razak has given the thumbs-up to the Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) Sungai Buloh-Kajang Line.

The prime minister said he and his family had the opportunity to tour and test the second phase of the MRT project, to be fully operational on Monday.

"I am satisfied with the world-class MRT Sungai Buloh-Kajang Line which is developed, carried out by thousands of our own people since 2010," he said.

"To all those involved, be proud of your achievement, recall the sacrifices, energy, time that should have been spent with family and friends. This is the product of your sweat and tears! I am proud with all of you," said Najib in a post on his blog, najibrazak.com, yesterday.

Najib said during the tour of the MRT Sungai Buloh-Kajang Line, he was also accompanied by his blogger friends who were excited to experience the train ride which passed through several underground stations.

He said the smooth MRT service refuted allegations by some residents, especially in the urban areas, the MRT project would affect their locality.

"Clearly it is not true with many of our people now getting a more holistic benefit of connectivity," said Najib.

He said his vision was to see a modern transportation system that would not only connect all the areas in the Klang Valley, Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya, but also a reliably efficient system.

"Do you know our train has a high frequency rate at 3.3 minute during peak hours for every train which has a capacity of 1,200 people at one time?" he asked.

The prime minister was also awed with the uniqueness of the MRT underground stations, each with their own identity, and also shared his experience using the feeder bus service to shutter passengers to nearby areas at a fare of only RM1. — Bernama

Inside one of the new MRT trains.

Jalur Gemilang decal for train carrying PM

By Ida Nadirah Ibrahim and Anith Adilah
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KUALA LUMPUR — Two trains boasting Jalur Gemilang decal will transport Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak from Tun Razak Exchange Station (TRX station) to Stadium Kajang Station on Monday

The much anticipated launch of the Klang Valley Mass Rapid Transit (KVMRT) Phase 2 Sg Buloh-Kajang Line 1 (SBK) will then climax with 20,000 guests attending an "open house" at Kajang Stadium which will be graced by Najib.

MRT Corporation Corp (MRT Corp) strategic communication and stakeholder relation director Datuk Najmuddin Abdullah said one feeder bus decorated with Jalur Gemilang decal will also be parked at the Stadium Kajang Station.

"The feeder bus will be displayed for people to see.

"There will be four trains on standby to transport guests from TRX station, which will depart at noon," he said following a media briefing yesterday.

Najmuddin said once operational, there will 300 feeder buses covering the routes along the SBK Line.

The feeder buses, which are an additional 188 from Phase 1, will cover 47 routes involving 24 stations.

MRT Corp project director Marcus Karakashian said the MRT, which is fully computer operated, has various benefits including lower operating cost, less maintenance and material replacements, as well as reduced headway between vehicles.

He said the SBK Line, which takes a total of 84 minutes per trip, will have a four-minute headway during peak hours on weekdays, from 7am to 9am, and 5pm to 7pm, and seven to 15 minutes headway during off-peak hours, including weekends and public holidays.

"As it is fully computerised, the trains will run on schedule and will not be disrupted by external human factors.

"Operating cost is also be reduced as there are fewer overheads. The system is built in such a way that we can transfer electricity generated back into the system," he said.

Karakashian, who has extensive experience in infrastructure projects in Singapore and United Kingdom, said, the project is world-class.

"I am very proud of this (project). It has one of the best tunnels I have seen and been in and involved tremendous efforts by the team," he said.

Phase 2 of the SBK Line consists of seven underground stations, with the railway running through the major roads in the city centre, such as Jalan Bukit Bintang, Jalan Damansara, and Jalan Cheras.

Karakashian said what sets the seven underground stations apart, is the unique themes assigned to each of them.

"As for the remaining 24 elevated stations, they feature a similar basic layout, but we made them appealing and modern.

"All stations are equipped with basic facilities such as concourse area, platforms, disabled-friendly facilities, elevators and escalators. There are travelators at some stations," he said.

Karashian said construction of the underground stations faced different challenges but mainly involved the excavation of land in existing public area.

Despite the challenges, he said, it would successfully provide connectivity with the existing railway stations.

"We are not rushing. We had not been pushed to open (on Monday), we are doing so because we are ready.

"We had three months of trials. There will be some tweaks along the line but we are ready to go," he said.