

MRT COACHES NOT A PLAYGROUND

IT is a shame that the Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) project owner has to grapple with vandalism at stations just a few days after Phase Two of the Sungai Buloh-Kajang (SBK) Line was launched.

It was also reported that people dumped rubbish in station compounds, marring the image of the RM21 billion project.

These are the acts of ugly Malaysians, who make up a small number of the population, but have made life difficult for others.

These culprits will vandalise whatever they can lay their hands on and their acts have affected the image and cleanliness of MRT

stations and their facilities.

MRT Corp strategic communications and stakeholder relations director Datuk Najmuddin Abdullah said he found a broken toilet and scratches on benches and walls, while cigarette butts, a broomstick and a broken spotlight were discarded on the roof of a sheltered walkway. Even the toilet bowl in a toilet for the handicapped was not spared.

I have raised my concern about this issue when Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak opened Phase One of SBK on Dec 15.

I said some of the challenges that the train operator had to deal with were vandalism and cleanliness.

The fact that the daily ridership for the SBK Line has surpassed the 140,000 mark, a week after it was fully operational, proves that it has gained popularity among the public.

I hope that MRT Corp and Rapid Rail ensure they and their contractors have sufficient cleaners.

The MRT owner and operator should have more manpower and install more closed-circuit television cameras to monitor the facilities and identify vandals.

Supervisors and staff must check on the cleanliness and safety of stations, including escalators. Maintenance and safety must be given priority.

If the vandalism issue cannot be addressed, I believe that it is high time that we introduced an anti-vandalism legislation that provides stiff penalties, including community service.

If need be, the government may emulate the legislation in a neighbouring country, where vandals can be caned if they are found guilty.

We have to take drastic action as vandalism is not only present in MRT stations, but also other facilities.

I urge MRT Corp and Prasarana to use their public announcement system to remind parents to monitor their children and ensure that they do not play

on the escalators and run around the platforms.

Parents should not treat MRT stations and coaches as playgrounds, where their children can roam and play freely as they are inviting danger.

I dread to think of accidents that may occur due to the negligence of parents.

We must change our mentality and educate the public on the importance of taking care of world-class facilities so that they can last not just for our use, but also for coming generations.

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