

Bright and breezy stop

By Daz Manan
daz@mmail.com.my

ONE of the first things you'll notice about the MRT train is that the coach is squeaky clean, spacious and the air-conditioning system seems to feel a lot cooler than other similar public transport.

Such convenience is not surprising since the Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) is relatively new. We were at the Bandar Utama MRT station recently and it is one of the stops on the Klang Valley Mass Rapid Transit (KVRMT) Sungai Buloh-Kajang Line which was launched in December last year.

At the time we were there, the spacious and spanking new stop was bare but there are signs which show promise that there'd be shops opening soon which will undoubtedly make the station more lively.

Despite the quiet atmosphere, the station is equipped with necessary facilities such as elevators, escalators, ticket vending machines, customer service centre, washrooms, prayer room and public phones.

Ramps and elevators as well as tactile guides and warning strips along walkways and platforms are also apparent for the disabled.

Interestingly, the elevated station was built to resemble a *wakaf* (traditional Malay gazebo or pavilion usually made of wood).

Which explains why the stop is bright (courtesy of natural lighting as well as the modern man-made variety) and airy because of its open sides.

Apparently, all the other elevated stations along the MRT Sungai Buloh-Kajang Line adopt the same open-sided *wakaf*-style architecture.

A stone's throw away from Sri Pentas, the headquarters of TV stations TV3, NTV7, 8TV and TV9, the Bandar Utama MRT stop is also located close to 1 Utama Shopping Centre, One World Hotel and 1 First Avenue office tower.

The mall, recognised by Forbes and CNN Travel, is the world's fourth largest spanning five million sq ft and six floors. It is home to more than 700 shops as well as two big names in cinema, TGV and GSC, with 20 viewing screens and a 36-lane bowling centre.

Commuters can easily head to the shopping centre from the station by hopping on 1 Utama's free shuttle bus service from 10.40am-11pm daily.

One World is a five-star hotel which also houses several dining



The spacious and spanking new stop.

outlets like Kura Japanese restaurant, The Sphere, Poolbar & Grill and Havana Club. There are plans to build a pedestrian walkway that directly links the station to the hotel.

As for 1 First Avenue, the 25-storey Grade-A office tower is said to be the only "green" building in Petaling Jaya. Among its eco-friendly facilities are a rain water harvesting framework that recycles rainwater for the "air-conditioning cooling towers system", toilet flushing and landscaping.

It is also an energy-efficient building designed to use as little energy as possible to minimise threats to the environment.

Apart from these places, you can also get to other areas such as Taman Tun Dr Ismail, Kampung Sungai Penchala and Kampung Sungai Kayu Ara using the feeder buses at the station which operate from the adjacent 1 Powerhouse building. You can get here easily via Entrance A of the station.

What's more, RapidKL bus 802 connects you from the station to the Kelana Jaya LRT station (from which you can go to stops such as KLCC, Gombak, Pasar Seni, KL Sentral and Putra Heights among others).



Inside the elevated station.

A facade of Sri Pentas.



Commuters boarding the feeder bus.