

Hassle-free rides with MRT

KUALA LUMPUR — It is usual for retiree Sharon Tan to go out with her friends every now and then for a meal and some shopping.

For their recent meet-up in Kajang, they decided to keep their cars at home and use public transportation because they wanted to try out the Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) service.

Tan, who is in her 50s, and her friends boarded the Light Rail Transit (LRT) train at one of the stations in the USJ area of Subang Jaya, Selangor.

As it was the morning peak hour, the train was packed with commuters.

They later switched to the MRT line at the Central Market Station in downtown Kuala Lumpur, which took them directly to Kajang.

"This is our first time on the MRT and I'm satisfied with the service," Tan told Bernama. "The coaches are spacious and comfortable."

Tan said she and her friends wanted to eat the famous Kajang satay and later, on their way back via MRT, stop at Jalan Bukit Bintang to do some window shopping before returning home.

The second phase of the 51km-long Sungai Buloh-Kajang (SBK) MRT line was launched by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak on July 17.

The entire stretch has 31 stations, seven of which are located underground. Each train set serving this line has four cars with a total capacity of 1,200 passengers per trip.

Phase one of the SBK line, from Sungai Buloh to Semantan in Damansara Heights, was launched on Dec 16 last year.

An eight-storey building with 300 parking lots caters to the commuters working in the city.

Most use their Touch 'n Go card to pay the parking fee as it also entitles the commuter to a flat of RM4.30.



Passengers enter a coach at a MRT station. — Picture by Yusof Mat Isa

The station received the thumbs-up from most commuters as not only was it designed with disabled-friendly facilities but also its cleanliness and spaciousness spoke volumes about the thought which went into the design.

The station's architectural concept is based on the traditional Malay *wakaf* or shelter where, in the olden days, travellers used to rest.

The station has an open, eco-friendly design that allows for natural lighting and ventilation.

The interior of the train cars is painted in shades of grey and greenish blue, creating a cool and peaceful atmosphere.

There were not many people in the coach initially but numbers started to increase

when it made its stops at various stations in Kota Damansara and Damansara.

Most of the passengers in the later part of the morning were senior citizens and college students.

Passengers Ibrahim Abdullah, 68, and his wife Rahimah Yusof, 67, who had come to Sungai Buloh from Rawang on the KTM Komuter train, were proceeding to Kuala Lumpur using the MRT service.

"We used to drive all the way to KL and it was tiring. The MRT has made it convenient for us to travel," said Ibrahim.

Noting that many senior citizens were using the MRT service, Women, Family and Community Development Minister Datuk Seri Rohani Abdul Karim had said her ministry planned to set up a volunteer team

to help the elderly and disabled passengers at MRT stations.

Businessman and financial adviser Faiz Najmi, 31, said since he started using the MRT, he has been able to cut his transportation costs by 80 to 90 per cent as he did not have to pay for parking and petrol.

"The MRT station near where I live in Taman Tun Dr Ismail has made it easier for me to go to Kuala Lumpur to meet my clients," said Faiz, who shares his MRT experiences on Facebook.

According to media reports, more than 200,000 commuters use the MRT line daily while traffic in the city has seen a 22 per cent decrease since the service was launched.