

Tunnelling work to start **next year**

> MRT SSP line to begin in Jalan Ipoh, end at Bandar Malaysia (South), Kuala Lumpur

BY **ADRIAN PHUNG**
newsdesk@thesundaily.com

GUANGZHOU: Tunnelling works for the Mass Rail Transit Sungai Buloh-Serdang-Putrajaya (SSP) line are scheduled to start in the first quarter of next year and digging work is expected to be completed in mid-2019.

Mass Rapid Transit Corp Sdn Bhd (MRT Corp) strategic communications and stakeholder relations director Datuk Najmuddin Abdullah said the 13.5km tunnelling works for the SSP line would start in Jalan Ipoh and end at Bandar Malaysia (South) in Kuala Lumpur.

"A total of 12 tunnel boring machines (TBM) are to be used - 10 variable density (VD) TBMs and two Earth Pressure Balance (EPB) TBMs. The additional machines are required as the underground alignment is longer than the Sungai Buloh-Kajang (SBK) line," Najmuddin told reporters during a recent factory acceptance test (FAT) for two of the four newly purchased TBM at the Guangzhou Herrenknecht Tunnelling Machinery Co Ltd factory in China.

Najmuddin said the FAT is a validation process to ensure that the system and design



BERNAMAPIX

Najmuddin (third from right) launching the factory acceptance test for the two new tunnel boring machines in Guangzhou, China.

of the machines met specifications set in the contract.

Najmuddin said four TBMs were

purchased from Herrenknecht China with each costing between RM40 million and RM60 million while eight were refurbished from the SBK line.

Among those present for the inspection were MRT Corp SSP line underground works director Blaise Mark Pearce, MMC-Gamuda KVMRT (T) Sdn Bhd (MGKT) tunnelling director Gusztav Klados and MGKT tunnelling general manager Ng Hau Wei.

Ng said among the challenges that may be

faced while doing the tunnelling work in Kuala Lumpur would be the karstic limestone geology, unpredictable cavities, fissures and fractured rocks in a densely built-up city.

Najmuddin said the MRT SSP project was 12.05% completed, and expected to reach 19% by the end of the year.

He added the first phase of the SSP line is to be completed by July 2021 while full completion of its 52.2km alignment, covering 37 stations (11 underground), is scheduled for full completion the following year.