

## 'MRT project on track and well within budget'

**END IN SIGHT:** Line 1 from Sungai Buloh to Kajang 78pc completed, says CEO

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**T**HE Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) project, the country's largest infrastructure development and backbone of the city's public transportation network, is on schedule and within the targeted cost.

MRT Corp Sdn Bhd chief executive officer Datuk Seri Shahril Mokhtar said MRT Line 1, from Sungai Buloh to Kajang, was close to 78 per cent completed.

"It's a great achievement. With that, we will be able to meet the deadline," the 43-year-old said.

The Urban Rapid Development Plan by the Land Public Transport Commission (SPAD) identified three MRT lines to serve as the backbone of the integrated public transport network for the Klang Valley.

Line 1 is the Sungai Buloh-Kajang line (SBK), Line 2 is the Sungai Buloh-Serdang-Putrajaya line (SSP, targeted completion is 2021/22) and Line 3 is the Circle Line.

In an interview with the *New Straits Times*, Shahril said phase one of Line 1, from Sungai Buloh to Semantan, should start operating by December. Phase two, from Semantan to Kajang, should be operational by July next year.

"The work packages we have awarded (so far) are around RM22

billion and the target cost is RM23 billion. So, we have a buffer. I'm confident that we will work within the target cost," said Shahril, who took over the helm of MRT Corp on Jan 5 last year.

The father of four has been involved in transportation infrastructure for close to two decades. He was Prasarana Malaysia Bhd group managing director, a position he held since 2010. Prior to that, he was chief operating officer of SPAD.

There are 84 packages for Line 1, compared with 66 for Line 2. Line 1 is 51km long and has 31 stations, with an underground portion of 9.5km. Line 2 is 52.2km long with 37 stations, of which 13.5km is underground.

Shahril said the MRT project had stayed on track and within budget, thanks to the Project Delivery Partner (PDP) approach.

"By having a highly competent contractor as PDP, the government eliminates the risk of cost overrun. There will be no surprises. We will know upfront that the construction cost is capped.

"The PDP concept provides a single point of accountability in terms of project budget, delivery programme and quality of work," added the University of Mis-

souri alumnus, who graduated with a degree in Industrial and Organisational Psychology.

The PDP for the Sungai Buloh-Kajang line, MMC-Gamuda, is motivated to save time and money to earn the PDP fees. If any packages undertaken by contractors fall behind schedule, MMC-Gamuda is required to step in and help speed up completion.

The PDP approach is likely to be implemented in other mega projects, including the Pan-Borneo Highway and Light Rail Transit 3.

"The MRT project is the first to adopt the PDP concept.

We've learnt a lot from it and identified areas to improve on safety, traffic management and stakeholders' relations. Ultimately, the PDP concept is to ensure the projects are delivered on time, within cost and without compromising on safety

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and quality.”

In terms of Bumiputera contractor participation, Shahril said for Line 1, 23 of 84 packages, valued at 43 per cent of RM23 billion, were targeted at Bumiputera contractors.

“That’s

quite huge, including underground packages. For Line 2, I’m confident it will be higher. I ex-

pect 37 out of 66 packages to go to Bumiputera contractors.”

Feasibility studies are underway for Line 3, which is meant to close the loop.

“We don’t have to wait until we finish construction of Line 2. We want to do this as soon as possible because if we don’t do it now, the cost is going to be much higher later. This is for the people.”



**The Project Development Partner concept adopted for the MRT project eliminates risk of cost overrun and ensures quality of work.**

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