

10/10/2003

Gliding into the heart of KL

Tina Melan

DRIVING to and from work daily, especially when caught in Kuala Lumpur exasperating traffic jams, I was always attracted to the bold and vibrant orange monorail coach that glides overhead through the city.

Other coaches are equally attractive, displaying creative advertising by corporate sponsors.

A month after the KL Monorail was officially launched, I took a ride on the city's latest addition to its "beat the traffic" solutions.

"The monorail is supposed to get people from one stop to another in connecting areas in the city," a friend said. "It is perfect for people who usually drive but need to get to a place fast."

After parking near KL Sentral, it was a short walk over to the KL Monorail main station on Jalan Tun Sambanthan, adjacent to the KL Sentral.

Contrary to what many may assume, the main station is not located inside KL Sentral, although the name of the monorail station is Sentral!

This means those who park in KL Sentral would have to cross Jalan Tun Sambanthan to get to the monorail station (which means getting wet in the rain if not suitably prepared).

At the station, I paid RM1.60 for a ticket to the Imbi station. In less than a minute upon my arrival at the boarding level, a coach arrived. The short coach can accommodate about 64 seated passengers. I got a seat.

The first city proper station is Maharajalela, where one can stop and continue walking to China Town, Chinese Assembly Hall, Hotel Mandarin Court, Hotel Mirama and Hotel Midah.

The station is located opposite the Hotel Mandarin Court, thus a walk to China Town would be quite a distance.

From Maharajalela, the coach stops at Hang Tuah station, which is a the connection for those who want to get around Jalan Hang Tuah, Jalan Hang Jebat, Jalan Kenanga and Jalan Stadium.

Then the coach glides right into Times Square at the Imbi station. Here, one need not take the stairs to cross a road to get to the city's latest shopping mall.

Besides Times Square, those who want to get to Kompleks Sun, Shaw Parade, Low Yat Plaza, Imbi Plaza, BB Park, Melia Hotel and Federal Hotel would find this station convenient.

After Times Square, I took the monorail again and continued through the Bukit Bintang, Raja Chulan, Bukit Nanas, Medan Tuanku, Chow Kit and finally Titiwangsa stations.

It seems that people, including tourists, were fully utilising the monorail as the coaches were full throughout my journey.

Those who stop at the Bukit Bintang station will find it quite convenient to walk short distances to Sungei Wang Plaza, Lot 10, BB Plaza, KL Plaza, Starhill, Bintang Walk, Planet Hollywood, Park Royal Hotel, Regent Hotel, Coronade Hotel, JW Marriot Hotel, Westin Hotel and Yayasan Selangor Building.

Those who have business in Jalan Raja Chulan, Jalan Tengah and Jalan Perak where complexes like the KL Tower, The Weld, Mutiara Kuala Lumpur Hotel, Equatorial Hotel, MAS Building, Wisma Genting, Kompleks Antarabangsa, Menara Promet, Menara Dion, Shahzan Insas Tower and Wisma Cosway are located can stop at Raja Chulan station.

The Bukit Nanas station is the connection to Suria KLCC, Petronas Twin Towers, and hotels like Renaissance, New World, Shangri-La and Concorde

and Hard Rock Cafe, while the Medan Tuanku, Chow Kit and Titiwangsa stations connects passengers to places in the surrounding area.

The KL Monorail was launched by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on Aug 31 at the Bukit Bintang station.

It runs along an 8.6km route with fares between RM1.20 and RM2.50, depending on which station one hops on and steps off.

Its daily operations start at 7am and ends at 8pm.