

RM2 Billion Saved In MRT Project - PM Najib
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KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 15 (Bernama) -- About RM2 billion could be saved from the initial targeted cost for the Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) project, said Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

The Prime Minister said the project could be implemented at a cost of about RM21 billion compared to the targeted cost of RM23 billion in the initial stage.

"However today, after all the contracts have been awarded and work is almost completed for the whole route, the actual construction cost is about RM21 billion.

"The MRT project is below budget and on time," he said in his speech when launching the first phase of the Sungai Buloh-Kajang (SBK) MRT project at the Kwasa Damansara station, near here today.

At the historic launching ceremony, the Prime Minister also announced a free MRT and feeder bus service for one month beginning tomorrow until Jan 16 next year as a gift to the people in conjunction with the new year.

"This gives an opportunity to the people to try the new, modern and efficient public transport facility," he said.

Describing the project as being close to his heart, Najib said it had all the characteristics which formed the thrust to his administration which was "People First, Performance Now".

He said that since taking over the helm of the country's leadership in 2009, he had heard the people's woes in tackling the problems of traffic congestion particularly in the Klang Valley.

"I don't want this slogan to become political rhetorics without any inputs...that's why the government wants to give top priority to public transport," he said.

Najib said the MRT project also gave direct and indirect benefits in terms of construction works, generating work opportunities, raising property values, productivity and time-saving for the people.

He said the project also succeeded in awarding 50 per cent of the total contract value to bumiputera companies, exceeding the target of 43 per cent set in the initial stage.

Also present at the launching ceremony at the Kwasa Damansara MRT station were Transport Minister Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai, Second Finance Minister Datuk Johari Abdul Ghani, Chairman of the Land Public Transport Commission (SPAD) Tan Sri Syed Hamid Albar and Chief Secretary to the Government who is also MRT Corp Chairman Tan Sri Dr Ali Hamsa.

"Although some of the work packages had been allotted for bidding by bumiputera companies, there were also bumiputera companies that had succeeded in winning the tenders for the open category,"

said Najib.

In fact the Prime Minister said bumiputera entrepreneurs were also given 50 per cent of the business spaces at the MRT station which far exceeded the initial target of 30 per cent.

"This is a fair and equitable sharing between bumiputera and non-bumiputera entrepreneurs so that they would get business opportunities involving the participation of all Malaysian ethnic groups," he said.

Meanwhile, Najib was confident that Rapid Rail Sdn Bhd, a subsidiary of Prasarana Malaysia Berhad as the operator of the MRT service, was fully prepared to play its role based on its wide experience in running the LRT, Monorail and bus services in the Klang Valley and other locations in the country.

Concluding his speech, Najib invited those present to board the MRT together with him from the Kwasa Damansara Station to the Sungai Buloh Station to experience the latest mode of public transport.

The first phase of the MRT route involved 12 stations between Sungai Buloh and Semantan covering a distance of 21 kilometres which would begin operations at 6am tomorrow.

It involved the Sungai Buloh; Kampung Selamat; Kwasa Damansara; Kwasa Sentral; Kota Damansara; Surian; Mutiara Damansara; Bandar Utama; Taman Tun Dr Ismail; Phileo Damansara; Pusat Bandar Damansara and Semantan stations.

The second phase covering a distance of 30 kilometres involved 19 stations from Semantan to Kajang which was expected to operate fully beginning July 31, 2017.

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