

Urban rail network a reality after almost a decade

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PUTRAJAYA: After six prime ministers and three transport ministers, an urban rail project that took nearly a decade to conceptualise and build is finally open for full service between Kwasa Damansara and Putrajaya Sentral.

Formerly known as the Sungai Buloh-Serdang-Putrajaya line, the Putrajaya MRT is the second piece of a puzzle that will eventually complete the Klang Valley mass rail transit (MRT) trinity when MRT3 or the Circle Line is built.

The completion of the line, initially pegged at RM39.35bil in terms of construction costs, was slashed to RM30.53bil in 2018 after a change in the Federal Government, with the cost reduction achieved by removing several major items such as stations, walkways, architectural finish and train sets.

The payment model to the main contractor was switched to turnkey, after the project delivery partner (PDP) model was dropped.

The Putrajaya Line was approved by the Cabinet on Feb 26, 2014, with an initial estimated cost of RM28bil, excluding consultant fees, project delivery partner fees, interest costs and the overhead costs for the project owner, Mass Rapid Transit Corporation Sdn Bhd (MRT Corp)

Subsequent adjustments to the line, such as an extension to Bandar Malaysia (adding another two underground stations), and other changes in the scope of work

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resulted in the cost going up to RM56.93bil.

Other costs for the Putrajaya line included RM6.18bil for land acquisition, RM0.36bil for feeder buses and a new depot in Serdang, RM1.2bil in other costs, as well as, RM9.84bil in interest expenses during construction.

The opening of the Putrajaya MRT has been roundly welcomed by industry stakeholders, with the Malaysian Rail Industry Corp (Maric) saying the project received maximum participation from local rail systems firms that were members of Maric.

“The Putrajaya Line construction involved 3,000 workers on a variety of system packages, including but not limited to communication, power supply systems, electric train assembly and signalling.

Universities in the area, including UniKL, UTHM, Community College

Masjid Tanah and UTAR, benefited from the offset programme, particularly in terms of know-how, teaching experience and infrastructure investment from successful collaboration programme under the Technology Depository Agency.

The Master Builders Association Malaysia (MBAM) is hopeful that with the Putrajaya MRT in full operation, areas accessible by the line will realise their full potential for development, which will stimulate the market and generate more jobs.

“We also believe that with the implementation of the MRT3 or Circle Line, there will be wider connectivity, which will further boost public transport usage.

“The MRT3 project will also allow the construction industry to benefit from the multiplier effect of this project and eventually help the construction industry to recover.

“The MRT3 project (planning) is already at an advanced stage, and should be implemented soonest. Without key mega projects, the recovery of the construction industry will be delayed at the expense of the contractor’s survival,” said Oliver HC Wee, MBAM president, in a statement.

Datuk PK Nara, managing director of SMH Rail Sdn Bhd said rail industry players were ready for a larger slice of the pie.

“There are lots of scope for localisation of rail products,” said Nara, whose company handled the local assembly of the Hyundai-Rotem rolling stock for the Putrajaya line.