



Rehda: A boost to Klang Valley

MRT3 Circle Line likely to bring multiplier effect to the local economy

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PETALING JAYA: After a challenging year for the housing market, the real estate industry is certain that the revived third MRT line in the Klang Valley is a big boost, bringing in a multiplier effect to the local economy.

The Selangor Real Estate & Housing Developers' Association (Rehda) chairman Datuk Ho Hon Sang said the MRT3 Circle Line would be a unique selling point for home buyers and investors.

"It is expected to link up the other rail lines, which will greatly improve the connectivity around the city centre area.

"This would also make it a unique selling point for home buyers or investors to own a property nearby due to the close proximity to the line.

"While there could be an increase in properties' pricing, this will be superseded by the improvement of the areas' attractiveness and desirability to live," he said here yesterday.

Ho, who is also Mah Sing Group Bhd chief executive officer, said the line would also benefit the company's projects in the city centre.

Last year, he said, had been a challenging year for the housing market given the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Data from the National Property Information Centre (Napic) said that in the first half of 2020, Malaysia's property market transaction volume and value decreased 27.9% and 31.5%, respectively, compared with 2019.

However, Ho said, the situation had gradually improved, especially with the positive take-up in our new project launches during the second half of last year.

"As the ongoing National Covid-19 Immunisation Programme expands to other phases in catering

to the other segments of the population this year, business sentiments

are expected to follow suit and we foresee the recovery momentum will also continue for the property market," Ho added.

On April 4, the Cabinet had given the go-ahead for the third MRT line in the Klang Valley which was suspended earlier, and MRT Corp hoped to kick-start the project in the second half of the year.

The Circle Line was planned to provide a loop to integrate several rail lines in the Klang Valley by 2025.

It was one of three planned MRT lines under the Klang Valley Mass

Rapid Transit Project spearheaded by MRT Corp, a special purpose vehicle under the Finance Ministry.

The Circle Line will form a loop line that encircles, but effectively bypassing Kuala Lumpur's central business district, while linking up most of the radial rail lines.

A real estate agency director who only wants to be known as Mano, said the MRT line project was certainly a good selling point for the relevant upcoming and under-construction projects among real estate agents during presentations.

However, considering that the government's Home Ownership Campaign (HOC) is coming to an end by May, he expected that the ripples on property sales will be limited if the campaign was not extended.

"The property market is still in recovery and with limited foreign labour working at project sites, developers are now slow in offering new projects and focused on selling those that have been opened for booking or under construction.

"Promotion and sales will slow down if the HOC is not extended because it means buyers have to pay more upon purchasing a property," he said.

Entrepreneur Ashley Koh, 40, from Kuala Lumpur and who is buy-

ing a property for investment, said public transport connectivity was an important factor to consider.

"A property project near public

transport infrastructures such as LRT or MRT will fetch an optimal rental rate compared with those that are only reachable by driving.

"City dwellers will always prefer a well-connected place that is convenient for them to travel to work or study.

"I will certainly consider projects like that or those that are within a small radius with shuttle services provided," she said, adding that the Circle Line's stations should be properly planned to balance passenger convenience and practicality.

Investment adviser Rauf Yahaya, 42, who has purchased two condominium units in Sentul together with his wife last year, said he was looking forward to the Circle Line's economic spillover effect with the proposed Sentul Barat and Sentul Timur stations.

"Sentul has limited coverage when it comes to rail line public transport, as the current Sentul Timur LRT station is about 3km away from my properties.

"The addition of the MRT line will certainly boost the property market in the area in years to come," he said.