

Manulife takes MRT 'journey' with commuters

Kuala Lumpur – Manulife Holdings Berhad (Manulife) has got even closer to its customers after being granted naming rights to one of the stations on the newly launched MRT Sungai Buloh-Kajang (SBK) line.

Following its teaming up with MRT at the Semantan station — now officially known as the Manulife Semantan MRT Station — the company's name will be featured on all route maps for the next five years. The interior of two trains running along the SBK line will carry the Manulife brand.

Manulife Group chief executive officer Mark O'Dell described the branding on trains and MRT stations as "pioneering". "I believe it is the first time in Asia something like this has been done. We often see branding on buses and taxis, but less at stations," he said at an "MRT Manulife Semantan Naming Celebration" yesterday. "The nature of our business means we are on a lifelong journey with our customers and the branding scheme here represents that well. This puts us literally in our customers' daily journey and is a visual reminder of how we can help to protect and improve their financial future."

MRT Commercial and Land Management director Datuk Haris Fadzilah said the high volume of commuters would benefit the licensees from the Station Naming Rights Programme. "The SBK line covers a corridor with 1.2 million people. The expected ridership of 400,000 passengers a day will elevate the exposure of brands participating in the programme," he said.

However, Haris said that not all stations along the SBK line would be renamed despite many requests after four brands were granted rights through the programme. He said licensees selected were chosen through a meticulous process. "There are some stations which carry specific prestige such as the Pasar Seni, Merdeka, Tun Razak Exchange and Muzium Negara stations," he said. "These stations should not be tampered with as they are tourist locations. However, we are considering to have another round of bidding for the station naming rights soon."

Other licensees of station names include Jendela Mayang Sdn Bhd (Pavilion Damansara Heights-Pusat Bandar Damansara), Kuala Lumpur Pavilion Sdn Bhd (Pavilion Kuala Lumpur-Bukit Bintang) and Aeon Co (M) Bhd (Aeon-Maluri).

Also present at yesterday's ceremony were Manulife Greater China Emerging Market executive vice-president and general manager Michael Huddart, Manulife Holdings Berhad chairman Datuk Dr Zaha Rina, and acting Canadian High Commissioner Timothy Mackey.

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