



02 JUL, 2025

## MRT reserves should be maintained well, rented out to businesses

The Star, Malaysia



## MRT reserves should be maintained well, rented out to businesses

THE Transport Ministry needs to ensure mass rapid transit (MRT) reserves are maintained well to prevent mishaps and untoward incidents.

Recently, branches falling on the MRT Kajang Line led to stoppage and delay for commuters.

It is hoped that Transport Minister Anthony Loke would look seriously at this problem as mishaps like this could derail fast-moving MRT trains, especially at night.

A major problem and shortcoming in Malaysia is lack of proper maintenance once a project is completed and handed over to the authorities.

The MRT Kajang and Putrajaya lines, completed a few years ago, now have tall trees growing too near the elevated tracks.

This could create untoward incidents, especially when trees have grown too tall and large, and small branches could snap and be blown onto the tracks during strong winds, forcing stoppage in the commuter service to clear the tracks.

The MRT reserves, which are about 6m wide, need to be



MRT reserves helpful for access in emergencies, but can also make money for the transport service provider. — Filepic

properly maintained.

In some places, there is hardly any room for growth of any vegetation or trees.

However, in a majority of

areas, mostly beyond built-up urban sites, there is plenty of land where trees can grow and in the future, pose problems.

Lack of care in maintaining

the reserves invites trespassing and other irresponsible activities like excavations, rubbish dumping and setting of fires.

Very much like how utility company Tenaga Nasional Bhd maintains its power line reserves by employing contractors to regularly clear the undergrowth and brush as a preventive measure, the MRT too needs to follow suit.

Well-maintained reserves could ensure safety and be helpful in case of emergencies as it will provide easier and convenient access along or under the tracks.

Meanwhile, one finds small businesses being conducted on MRT reserves in some places.

These reserves can be rented out, wherever possible, to earn revenue.

Railway Asset Corporation, for example, rents out areas along railway tracks to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and earns money for permission to use the reserve.

This is also helpful for small businesses that cannot pay high rent.

Some MRT reserves are in prime locations commercially for carparks, horticultural nurseries and food courts – and if utilised well, can bring in a few million ringgit a year.

Furthermore, the vacant land at Sungai Buloh and Kajang depots are not fully utilised and can be rented to commercial interests temporarily until such time when it is needed.

These areas currently resemble a mini jungle and should be put to good economic use.

Even the numerous street lights leading to these depots are faulty and have not lit up for months if not years.

MRT needs to take into consideration that good maintenance and proper upkeep can enhance the image of a company and its operations, and create a favourable impression of the service used by millions of commuters.

It is hoped that the MRT management and Transport Ministry will look at this feedback positively and act on it.

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