

MRT line formerly known as 'Zhahu' breaks down again

Written by Taipei Times

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The MRT's Wenshan-Neihu Line experienced two more breakdowns yesterday — in the morning and the evening — related to power interruptions in the tunnel between the Dazhi and Songshan Airport stations.

The operation center first cut power in the tunnel at 10:21am after detecting an abnormal signal, suspending service between Zhongshan Junior High School and Jiannan stations until 12:18pm, the Taipei Rapid Transit System Corp (TRTC) said.

Spokesman Tan Gwa-guang (譚瓜光) said four trains were in the tunnel when the power was interrupted. All 650 passengers were evacuated by 11:13am, Tan said. Some passengers were trapped in trains for 52 minutes.

Tan apologized for the suspension and said the TRTC would give the trapped passengers 10 single-trip tickets as compensation.

"The TRTC is still looking into the cause of the power interruption," he said at Taipei City Hall before the second malfunction in the evening, between 7:24pm and 7:37pm, along the same stretch.

The TRTC offered free shuttle buses between Zhongshan Junior High and Jiannan stations during the suspension of service.

Passengers who were stuck on the trains complained that the air conditioning turned off during the first malfunction.

"We were trapped inside the trains for more than 50 minutes and it was so hot in there," a passenger surnamed Huang said afterward at the Zhongshan Junior High Station.

"This is really a waste of everyone's time ... The city needs to fix this problem," said Hsu Chia-ning (許家寧), who was waiting for a shuttle bus. "I've been afraid of taking the [line] ever since it started having problems."

Several passengers got into an argument with TRTC officials who said they did not know what the problem was.

"We just got called in from other stations as support," said a TRTC official who wished to remain anonymous. "We have not been told what went wrong."

"[The city] should have done more trials and testing before opening the line," said a woman surnamed Lee. "I'm very disappointed ... but at least it didn't happen at rush hour."

But other passengers laughed it off.

Lugging three large suitcases, Chang Yu-cun (張玉存) said: "It's my first time on the MRT and I

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run into a problem.”

He ended up taking a taxi to Songshan Airport.

Yesterday’s breakdowns were the fourth and fifth since the Taipei City Government changed the name of the line from the “Muzha-Neihu Line” to the “Wenshan-Neihu Line.”

The city spent about NT\$1 million (US\$30,000) on changing the name to shake off the nickname “Zhahu” (ㄓㄠˊ), a mahjong term for when a player mistakenly thinks they’ve won a round of the game.

Taipei Mayor Hau Lung-bin (郝龍斌) had promised to increase the stability of the line to about 90 percent by this month. He did not comment yesterday.

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