Minister on new routes, fare discounts

More bus services, bus lanes, train trips

About 90 of the 800 new buses that Singapore is getting are already on the roads, and another 190 are expected this year, Transport Minister Lui Tuck Yew said in Parliament yesterday.

The Government is paying for 550 of these and the public transport operators for the rest.

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These bus services will be run by private operators and tenders for these routes may be put up as early as the second quarter of this year.

About 30km of bus lanes will be added across the island in the next two years to facilitate busing.

In addition, SMRT will buy six more trains to increase its fleet. This is on top of the 35 new trains previously announced, effectively increasing train numbers by more than 30 per cent.

Operators will also run about 10 per cent more train trips and commuters on the North-South and East-West Lines are expected to see changes as early as the second half of this year.

The Ministry is looking at doubling the off-peak travel discount to $1, or even waiving charges for trips made before a cut-off time in the morning.

Responding to concerns raised by MP Ang Hin Kee, Mr Lui said that SMRT will buy 30km of noise barriers where noise levels exceed the National Environment Agency’s guidelines.

This is especially so in areas such as Ang Mo Kio, where residents living on streets near the tracks have been plagued by noise problems.

Mr Lui said that customer satisfaction with public transport dropped marginally to 88.8 per cent last year, from 90.3 per cent in 2011.

According to the annual UniSIM survey, the unhappy stems from overcrowding and issues with reliability.

– Elizabeth Law