A NEW reflection pool sited between the Singapore Art Museum and Singapore Management University (SMU) is more than a water feature providing cool relief to passers-by. The tennis court-sized pool is also a skylight for the Bras Basah MRT station, a five-level structure that goes 35m below ground – deeper than any MRT station here. The skylight idea from local firm Wo-Ha Architects allows the station to be used without artificial lighting in the day. At night, the lit station gives the open area in front of the SMU a surreal glow.

When sunlight streams through the glass roof, slanting side walls reflect it to deeper levels of the station. Giving The Straits Times a tour of the station, the Land Transport Authority's Circle Line director Sim Wee Meng said the skylight will help make the commuting experience better.

The 70,000 litres of running water on the roof have more than an aesthetic role. The pool also helps to dissipate heat. “If it was just plain glass without the water, it would get quite hot,” explained Mr Sim.

Being so deep, the station is served by 41.3m-long escalators – the longest in Singapore’s rail network. Currently, the longest in operation are at Changi Airport MRT station, measuring 37.9m. The Bras Basah station’s expansive walls look bare now, but there are plans to project slide shows onto them.

There is still some work to be done before the station is completed. Electrical and signalling systems required to run the trains are being installed and testing of the systems is expected to commence in 2009.

The $6.7 billion 33.3km Circle Line is expected to open in stages from 2010. The first phase is likely to be a 5km stretch between Bartley and Marymount.

Although the city and eastern portions of the line are largely in advanced stages of completion, some stations – including the new Nicoll Highway and Dakota stations – are lagging behind.

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