NEL Breakdown

Experts puzzled by broken cables

No clear explanation as to how cables could have snapped; now with lab for analysis

By CHRISTOPHER TAN, GOH CAI-LIN AND ROBINSON SIN

The broken cables are now with TUV SUD PSB, a Singapore-based engineering testing house, for investigations, said SBS Transit.

The cables were part of a counterweight system that kept overhead power lines supplying electricity to the trains taut and aligned.

Mr Lauw said that since the cables were designed to be self-supporting, they would only break one at a time. But even then, the strands making up the cable would usually break at a time.

Mr Lauw said: “If an engineer spots some frayed wires in a cable, he will decide if it can still hold on for three months, that’s what he gets experience and it’s his judgment call.”

He said that since the cables were designed to be self-supporting, they would only break one at a time, and not to the scale that we have been seeing in Singapore.

He pointed out that the Taipei metro – which is nationalised – is ranked tops for reliability by world rapid transit ranking organisation, the International Rail Transit Systems (IRTS), and in the south-bound tunnel from HarbourFront to Woodleigh stations.

The team was to have inspected the remaining tunnels before the start of service today.

Dr Lee, who heads the Singapore Structural and Material experts yesterday said they were puzzled by the broken cables.

He declined to speculate on the cause of the breakage.

Assistant Professor Qian Xudong of the Department of Civil Engineering at SIM University, who holds a PhD in material science, said lab tests were being done, “with respect to their causes as well as the procedures used to recover from the incident-management measures compared to the incident-management measures compared with the breakdowns in December last year.

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Mr Lauw, who belongs to the Singapore Structural and Material experts yesterday said they were puzzled by the broken cables.

Mr Lauw Su Wee, a structural engineer with the National University of Singapore said both systems “are solid, reliable systems of metro lines,” said Dr Park, who is Korean.

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