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\$180m depot heralds new era for KMB

THE Kowloon Motor Bus (KMB) company's largest regional maintenance depot, built at a cost of \$180 million in Sha Tin, will come into operation in March.

It will provide servicing facilities for 574 buses in the New Territories, supplementing KMB's four other major depots in Kwun Tong, Lai Chi Kok, Tuen Mun and Kwai Chung.

KMB deputy public relations manager Miss Brenda Lee Siu-kwan said the company will start phasing out the older buses in its 2,800-strong fleet.

Under a five-year plan, the company plans to buy 1,173 new vehicles — double-deckers and new, air-conditioned 24-seat midibuses.

It also plans to introduce 48 routes serving new housing developments and exploiting highway and tunnel developments throughout

Kowloon and the New Territories.

Miss Lee said the company was still testing an air-conditioned double-decker bus which has been operating in Kowloon since June, before making a decision on placing more orders.

The bus, which has a capacity of 140 passengers, costs around \$1.1 million — \$100,000 more than an ordinary double-decker.

KMB also reminded passengers that fares will be increased from Sunday.

Under the new scale, passengers travelling on Kowloon urban routes and short New Territories routes will pay 20 or 30 cents more.

Passengers travelling on longer routes will pay 40 cents or 60 cents more.

Those travelling on long-distance express routes and on the air-conditioned Airbus services will pay 70 cents to \$1 more.