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5 European nations keen on Trans Asia Railway project

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THE proposed Trans Asia Railway project, which will link Singapore to Kunming in Southern China, has attracted the interest of Germany, Italy, France, Britain and Poland. Deputy Transport Minister Datuk Wira Mohd Ali Rustam said these countries had shown a keen interest through their respective official ministerial visits to Malaysia.

He was speaking to reporters after meeting Berlin Development, Housing and Transport Minister Senator Juergen Klemann in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

Mohd Ali however could not comment on the extent of their interest in the project.

He said that the preliminary study of the Trans Asia Railway study will be completed by the end of this year.

The Trans Asia Railway project, to run through 11 countries from South-East Asia to South West China, was first proposed by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad two years ago. Malaysia is the chairman of the working group and coordinator of the project.

The Berlin delegation also expressed interest in the bridge to link Malaysia and Sumatra, and Mohd Ali directed them to liaise directly with the private consortiums involved in the project.

The German delegation, comprising 9 delegates from the Berlin Municipal Authority and leaders of big German based companies in Malaysia, is in Malaysia on a three-day visit. On newspaper reports that motorists had been issued summonses through the post on traffic offences which they did not commit, Mohd Ali said the ministry has yet to receive any complaints on the matter. Reports alleged that some recipients of summonses did not even own cars.

He said motorists who can prove that they were not at the place at the time as stated in the summonses can lodge an official complaint to the ministry to enable further investigations to be carried out. Later at another function, Mohd Ali said no decision had been made on the issue of car pooling yet because the Government is waiting for the city's transport infrastructure to be completed first.

"The Government will observe the situation after everything is in place. Perhaps by then we will not even need to impose car pooling, depending on the congestion in the city," he said, adding that traffic is expected to be reduced by 30 per cent once all the infrastructures are in place.

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