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Ling-Trans Asia

CONSORTIUM APPOINTED FOR TRANS-ASIA RAIL LINK

KUALA LUMPUR, May 14 (Bernama) -- The government has appointed a consortium of two local consultant firms to conduct a feasibility study on the proposed Trans-Asia rail link, Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik said today.

The two are KL Consult and Za'aba Consultancy which would focus on technical and engineering aspects of the study.

"They were appointed early this month and expected to complete the study by early next year," he told reporters after opening the 2nd International Exhibition of Railway Technology for the Asian Market (Exporail Asia '97) at Putra World Trade Centre, here.

Dr Ling said the consortium would work together with a professor from Universiti Malaya's Economy faculty who will undertake the economic aspect of the study.

Three routes from Singapore to Kunming in Southern China have been shortlisted for the feasibility study.

Dr Ling said the RM2 million contributed by Malaysia for the study was inadequate and was looking for additional funds from other sources.

He said the government did not approach other countries involved in the project but looking at various sources within Malaysia to finance the study.

The Trans-Asia rail network will begin from Singapore, pass through Peninsular Malaysia to Bangkok before branching out in three directions.

The first will run through the Mekong basin countries of Cambodia and Vietnam and then to Kunming, the second will be from Bangkok to Vientiane in Laos and to Kunming while the third route will run into Myanmar and end in Kunming.

The project was proposed by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at the fifth Asean Summit in Bangkok two years ago and Malaysia was appointed coordinator for the project.

The three-day Exporail Asia '97 exhibition is a rail trade show designed to bring the buyers and decision-makers from the Asia Pacific region with worldwide suppliers of railway equipment and services.

It is being attended by some 150 firms from 27 countries, among them are Australia, China, India, Italy, South Africa, Britain and hosts Malaysia. -- BERNAMA

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