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Kedah-Prai high-speed train link plan

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ALOR STAR, Wed. - The State Government is working on a proposal to start a high-speed train service from Bukit Kayu Hitam to Prai, Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Sanusi Junid said today.

He said the proposal was being prepared by the State Transport Committee headed by State Exco member Datuk Beh Heng Seong.

Sanusi said the high-speed train service would solve transportation woes currently experienced by most factory owners to bring their workers to their factories in Prai.

"We will allow the development of hostels and lodging facilities to house factory workers along the railway line.

"The workers could then use the railway service to travel to their factories in Prai," he told reporters after chairing the State Exco meeting at Wisma Darul Aman.

The proposed high-speed train service was among the agendas in today's Exco meeting.

Sanusi said discussions would be held with landowners on how their land could be used to build the railway tracks.

The idea of the high-speed train service was mooted by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

During his visit to Kedah on Jan 9, Dr Mahathir had proposed that the State Government take advantage of the flat terrain to introduce the service.

He said the flat terrain in Kedah would enable the construction of railway tracks for high-speed trains travelling at 170kph, cutting the travelling time by about half an hour.

At present, motorists need one hour 15 minutes to travel to Prai from Alor Star on the North-South Expressway and two hours using the Federal road.

The Exco meeting also discussed a plan to relocate graveyards located in the heart of Alor Star town.

Sanusi said the State Government had decided to allow Chinese associations to develop the Chinese cemeteries in Jalan Langgar and Jalan Tun Razak.

He said the cemeteries could be relocated elsewhere so that the plot could be developed for commercial use.

The Menteri Besar also said the State Government would set up a Quran readers' association aimed at improving the quality of Quran recital.

Sanusi also instructed the local authorities to remove all signboards at designated protected areas which warn that a person would be shot for trespassing.

"I don't think our country is that uncivilised and I have never heard (of a law) that anybody who trespasses will be shot ... for all I know if they want to break into a building with fences, they will find a way to get in. In fact, the guard will run away," he added.

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