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KPB to build berth in Bombay

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KONSORTIUM Perkapalan Bhd will sign an agreement with Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust next month to build an extension berth at the port situated in Bombay, India. Construction will be done on a build, operate and transfer basis, Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik said yesterday.

Konsortium Perkapalan secured the licence to build, operate and transfer the two-berth container terminal at the port in January this year.

Dr Ling was speaking to reporters after an hour-long meeting with Indian Minister of Surface Transport T. G. Venkatraman in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

The Indian minister is leading a four-member delegation to Malaysia to study the country's privatized highway systems.

The two ministers also discussed the use of waterways for passenger traffic and cargo transportation.

Malaysia, he said, this is one area in which Malaysia can study for possible adoption to reduce traffic congestion in the city.

"India has a population of 960 million people, and so their roads get very congested. One of the ways they have overcome the problems of traffic jams is by making use of the waterways, both inland and coastal, for transporting people," he said, giving the example of Tamil Nadu and Gujarat.

Dr Ling said the Malaysia is thinking of setting up a National Inland Waterway Authority which will be in charge of cleaning the country's waterways and making it fit for various uses, such as transport of passengers and cargo or aquaculture.

He said the first project the authority, once set up, will be looking at is the building of weirs - to stabilise the water level so that the banks do not get eroded - in Sungai Selangor, making it attractive for tourism.

He added that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, while on his holiday in Europe, had looked at and considered many ways in which the country's waterways can be improved and better utilised.

He got the idea for the building of weirs when he was in London.

Dr Ling said using the waterways in such a way is practical, as countries like Holland, Germany and France also did so.

With regards the toll review, Dr Ling said as a responsible government, it is its duty to stabilise the toll charges and bring it to a level which is affordable by all.

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