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KTM land in S'pore: What the agreement states

Lam Chuan Leong

THE article, "Differences hold up plan to develop KTM's Singapore land" (NST, March 19) does not reflect accurately the points of agreement on Malayan Railway land, signed in 1990 between the Governments of Singapore and Malaysia.

The agreement requires KTM Berhad to vacate the railway station at Tanjong Pagar and move it to a site along Upper Bukit Timah Road, or at Woodlands near the Woodlands Mass Rapid Transit station. (see CORRECTION above)

The agreement states that it is Singapore's judgment that the railway station at Upper Bukit Timah should be economically built, as in the long term, it would benefit Malaysia to locate the terminus at Woodlands or Johor Baru.

The two Governments agreed to set up a joint venture company, M-S Pte Ltd, to develop the Tanjong Pagar land when it is vacated.

Malaysia will have a 60 per cent stake in this company and Singapore, 40 per cent. The Tanjong Pagar land will be given a freehold title in exchange for the existing lease.

The agreement provides that when the Tanjong Pagar station is relocated to Upper Bukit Timah, all railway land south of Bukit Timah other than the Tanjong Pagar site will revert to Singapore.

When the Upper Bukit Timah station is relocated to Woodlands, two more pieces of freehold land in Kranji and Woodlands will be vested in M-S Pte Ltd, and all other railway land south of Woodlands will revert to Singapore.

The article said Singapore had suggested Malaysia consider giving up the Tanjong Pagar and Bukit Timah lands for other plots in a commercial centre, but that the value of land proposed by Singapore was not on par with the value of the Tanjong Pagar property.

This is incorrect. Under the agreement, if M-S Pte Ltd does not wish to develop Tanjong Pagar, the Singapore Government will provide a suitable site of equivalent value in Marina South. It gives two examples of such sites, and further provides that if these two sites are not suitable, then other suitable sites in Marina South of equivalent value shall be offered to M-S Pte Ltd.

In December 1995, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad proposed an electric train service between Singapore and Malaysia as part of a Trans-Asian railway service.

Singapore Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong supported this idea, as one aspect of a wider framework of co-operation between the two countries.

Dr Mahathir preferred this electric train service to end at Tanjong Pagar. Goh is willing to consider this. He has also offered alternative sites at Scotts Road, Suntec City or Marina South for the terminal. These three sites will be linked to Singapore's MRT network, and may be more suitable for an inter-city high-speed passenger service than Tanjong Pagar.

Goh has also offered to have Singapore invest in the republic's sector of this new electric railway to help make the service viable.

Lam Chuan Leong

Permanent Secretary

(National Development)

Ministry of National Development

Republic of Singapore

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