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Malaysia ready to sign MoU with Koper port

Michelle Sheares

MALAYSIA is ready to sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Port of Koper in Slovenia for the exchange of technical cooperation, information and training, Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik said.

"We are ready to sign the MOU, which will also cover aspects like the exchange of trends in cargo movements and port management systems," he said, adding that the Slovenian port officials were also very keen on signing.

He also said some terminal operators in Port Klang had been advised to look seriously into the possibilities of cooperation with the Port of Koper, and how it can be used as a means to cut down the number of days taken to ship cargo to the Eastern European countries, like Austria and the Commonwealth Of Independent States.

"As mother vessels do not stop everywhere, cargo from the East will have to go all the way to the port of Rotterdam, after which the cargo is fed back again. So we want to study how we can shorten the route and save between three to four days for cargo shipment," he said.

The Port of Koper is situated at the southern transport route to Europe and affords the shortest connection from the Far East through the Suez Canal and Adriatic Sea to Central Europe.

He was asked to comment on his recent visit to the port, where he was part of a delegation led by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on a three - day official visit to Slovenia.

Dr Ling said this to reporters yesterday in Sungai Besi after assessing the progress of Sistem Transit Aliran Ringan Sdn Bhd (Star-LRT) Phase II.

He said he was satisfied and confident the trains will adequately serve the large number of visitors to the Commonwealth Games Village for the Games next September.

"By January or February next year, most of the lines will be energised and the trains will be able to undergo test runs. By April 1, the staff will start their three month training, and non-revenue trial runs will also take place," he said, adding that commercial passenger operations will commence on July 1 1998.

The Phase II LRT system will have three car passenger trains which can carry 1,200 passengers per train. The frequency of train intervals will be two minutes.

STAR-LRT chief executive officer, Encik Zainal Abdul Ghani said Star is proud to play a role and be able to contribute to the national sports event. He said the company is working closely with Sukom on how to promote the Commonwealth Games as well as use of the LRT, which will be the main public transport system, to the sports complex.

Phase II is a 15km extension of Phase I. It comprises two sections and is served by 12 stations. Section A is a 11.8-km Southern extension from Chan Sow Lin to Komanwel station and section B is a 3.2km northern extension from Sultan Ismail to Sentul Timur.

Section A is expected to be ready by July next year, while the northern extension is expected to be ready by end 1998.

Dr Ling added that he believed many people will use the trains to visit the sports complex as it was a reliable, regular and efficient system, which by-passed traffic jams.

On the common ticketing system for the various modes of transport in the

city, Dr Ling said City Hall is having negotiations with the various bus companies and even taxi companies to see how to make the system work.

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