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Study on S'pore-Kunming rail link

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KTM Bhd has identified two local consultants which will undertake the feasibility study on the Trans-Asia Railway linking Singapore to Kunming in Southern China.

One of the consultants will undertake the engineering while the other on the economic feasibility, Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik said.

"KTM and the consultants are now negotiating the terms of reference and fees," he told reporters after attending the weekly Cabinet meeting yesterday.

However, Dr Ling declined to name the consultants.

To a question, he said if necessary, the local consultants could engage foreign expertise for inputs in some specialised areas.

KTM was appointed as project manager of the Trans-Asia Railway (Singapore-Kunming Link) at the special working group of the Trans-Asia Railway link in Kuala Lumpur last December.

It will liaise with the project's consultants.

The proposed Trans-Asia link runs through Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok, Ho Chi Minh, Phnom Penh-Hanoi and Kunming. The rail will also pass through Laos and Myanmar. The project will have a proposed rail line of 5,513km.

On Malaysia Airlines, Dr Ling said he is not aware of any pilot who discredited the airline, its chairman Tan Sri Tajudin Ramli said.

"Why are you asking me?" he said in a jest.

Dr Ling said the matter was not discussed at the Cabinet.

"Things are under control," he said.

Last Friday Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said there appeared to be a campaign to discredit the management of Malaysia Airlines and Tajudin by those hoping to takeover the national carrier.

Dr Mahathir also refuted rumours that Tajudin had wanted to sell his stake in the airline as he could no longer manage it.

The Prime Minister had said: "If there were really something that was not good, then we can (criticise), but if you make a campaign to put down Malaysia Airlines and make it look that its management had failed, then in that case we will have an airline that will fail."

On Tuesday, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said he did not brief Dr Mahathir on the alleged conspiracy by certain quarters to discredit Tajudin.

Anwar had said the concern is on the general services of all agencies and departments.

The Deputy Prime Minister has recently said all transport operators, including Malaysia Airlines, need to improve their services, adding that the public transport situation left much to be desired.

On the move by the Road Transport Department to publicise the names of errant taxi drivers, Dr Ling said any moves to discipline errant taxi drivers should be encouraged and supported.

"What else do you suggest," he said to a question whether the move to publicise the names of the drivers is drastic.

The Road Transport Department intends to publicise the names of taxi drivers in major newspapers and over radio stations from next week.

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