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Trans-Asia rail link study to be completed by year end

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - Preliminary studies by Malaysian experts on the Trans-Asia Railway would be completed by the end of the year, Deputy Transport Minister Datuk Wira Mohd Ali Rustam said today.

Companies interested in taking part in the project should get in touch with the Ministry, which is the co-ordinator for the railway link, once the studies were completed.

"So far, countries like Germany, France, Italy, Britain and Poland have shown interest in the project which links Singapore to Kunming in Southern China." he said.

Mohd Ali was speaking to reporters at his office after meeting the German Development, Housing and Transport Minister, Senator Juergen Klemann who is on a three-day working visit to Malaysia.

"The delegation from Berlin has expressed interest in the development of the Trans-Asia Railway and the construction of the bridge linking Malaysia and Sumatra in Indonesia." he added.

The Trans-Asia Railway will run from Singapore through Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok, Aranyaprathet, Poipet, Sisophon (all in Thailand), Phnom Penh and Lok Ninh (Cambodia), Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi (Vietnam) to Kunming in China.

The project, stretching a distance of 5,513 km, was mooted by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at the fifth Asean Summit in Bangkok last December.

The nine-member delegation, led by Klemann and includes Berlin Municipal Authority members and entrepreneurs, also expressed interest to take part in the future development of KTM Bhd which is expected to be privatised by the end of this year.

Mohd Ali said: "Interested companies from Germany can further discuss the matter with the consortium undertaking the privatisation of KTMB, which includes DRB Bhd, Renong Bhd and Bolton Properties Sdn Bhd.

Klemann said Malaysia attracted a good deal of attention in Germany due to its economic growth rate and also because of the growing volume of trade in the past few years.

"With this visit, I hope there will be excellent co-operation between both countries." He said Malaysia would be allowed one of the days in the 'Asia Week' to be held from Sept 18 in Berlin. "It is also part of our promotion to attract more people to visit Malaysia during the the 1998 Commonwealth Games in Kuala Lumpur."

Later, Mohd Ali, asked to comment on reports in The Malay Mail that motorists have received summonses through the post for traffic offences which they did not commit, he said the Ministry had not received any complaints.

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