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Trans-Asia Railway gets unanimous vote

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. - All Asean Transport Ministers have unanimously accepted the proposal to develop the Trans-Asia Railway linking Singapore to Kunming in China via several Asean countries, including Malaysia.

Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik said the decision was made following the tabling of the feasibility study of the project by Malaysia at the Asean Transport Ministers' meeting which he attended in Brunei recently.

Following their acceptance, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad would submit the feasibility study at international conferences involving Asean countries to get more views and suggestions regarding the project, Dr Ling told reporters after meeting with State Road Transport Department directors at the ministry here today.

He said the feasibility study was jointly conducted by three local companies - KL Consultant, Zaaba Consultancy and the Economics Faculty of Universiti Malaya.

He said the study encompassed various aspects including economic, engineering, tourism and development and also how the project could help promote closer relations among Asean countries.

The proposal for the Trans-Asia Railway project, spanning 5,513km across seven Asean countries, was first mooted at the Asean Summit in Bangkok in 1995.

Three routes were suggested namely Singapore-Kuala Lumpur-Bangkok Kampuchea-Vietnam-Kunming; Singapore-Kuala Lumpur-Bangkok-Laos-Vietnam-Kunming; and Singapore-Kuala Lumpur-Bangkok Myanmar-Kunming.

Indonesia, Brunei and the Philippines are not involved in the project.

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