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Ling-Railways
RAIL TRANSPORT WILL REMAIN COMPETITIVE

JOHOR BAHRU, Jan 21 (Bernama) -- Rail transport as one of the choices for transporting cargo has a bright future, especially with the completion of the Trans-Asian Singapore-China rail network soon, Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik said here today.

Cost of transporting one tonne of cargo by rail is 5 sen for every 0.6 km, compared with one sen via sea transport, eight sen via roads and 55 sen via air transport.

Therefore the common mode of cargo transport is via sea while upon arrival at the port of destination, the most economical transport was rail, he said at the opening of the the rail extension from Kulai to Port of Tanjung Pelepas (PTP) at Wisma PTP near here today.

Railways could be the main choice of transport in the world if rail network was expanded more widely, he said when referring to the Trans-Siberian rail network from China to Europe which would be connected to the Trans-Asia line.

Cargo transported via the Trans-Siberian networks would take 16 days, compared to 26 days by sea, with cost savings of US\$800 for each TEU.

"The suggestion for a rail link from Singapore to Kunming was mooted by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and this vision has received the blessings of all the countries in the region,"he said.

Dr Ling said that China's Prime Minister Zhu Rongji had recently made a commitment for a US\$4 billion allocation for the completion of tracks from Bangkok to Kunming as part of the Trans-Asian rail network.

On the double track electrification system in the Klang Valley, he said it would be extended to Ipoh, Padang Besar in the north and to Johor Baharu.

The double track system would provide a five-fold increase in daily frequency of rail trips. Currently the single tracks provide an average of 10 trips daily.

Dr Ling hoped that the PTP extension built at a cost of RM460 million would help boost development in the PTP and in Johor.

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