

Open tender for monorail project

KUALA LUMPUR: The long suffering people of Penang, held ransom by taxi drivers and poor bus service, will get an alternative — the monorail.

The Government has decided that the contract to build the RM1.2 billion monorail project will be awarded through an open tender system.

The bidding for the project is expected in the next few months.

It was one of three big projects announced by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad

Badawi for Penang under the Ninth Malaysia Plan.

Penang Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon had said earlier the Government believed the building of the monorail was necessary to overcome the weaknesses in the public transport system that had become serious in the State.

Scomi Group Bhd's listed engineering outfit, Scomi Engineering Bhd, is part of a consortium that is reportedly bidding to build the monorail

system.

Others bidding for the project are Melewar Industrial Group Bhd and MMC Metrail Sdn Bhd.

A source from Scomi said yesterday a proposal would be submitted to the Government soon.

"Yes, we are bidding for the project as we have the expertise in this field. We have a proven monorail system in Kuala Lumpur," she said.

Although the company declined to identify its partner for the project or disclose anything about its

proposal, rumours are rife that it will team up with KL Infrastructure Group Bhd, operator of the existing monorail system in Kuala Lumpur.

Melewar has announced that it is proposing to build a 51.12km Hi-Track ultra light loop monorail system there at a cost of RM1.58 billion.

MMC Metrail, in which Tan Sri Syed Mokhtar Al-Bukhary's flagship MMC Corp Bhd has a 20 per cent stake, has been said to have received a letter of exclusivity to

undertake the job.

The letter was given in October 2003 to build a RM1.1 billion 37km long monorail transit linking Komtar and Bayan Lepas.

Sources familiar with MMC Metrail's bid for the monorail said they expected the firm to meet the Government's requirement that qualified firms submit their proposals for the project.

This was despite the fact that it owned a letter of exclusivity, one source said.