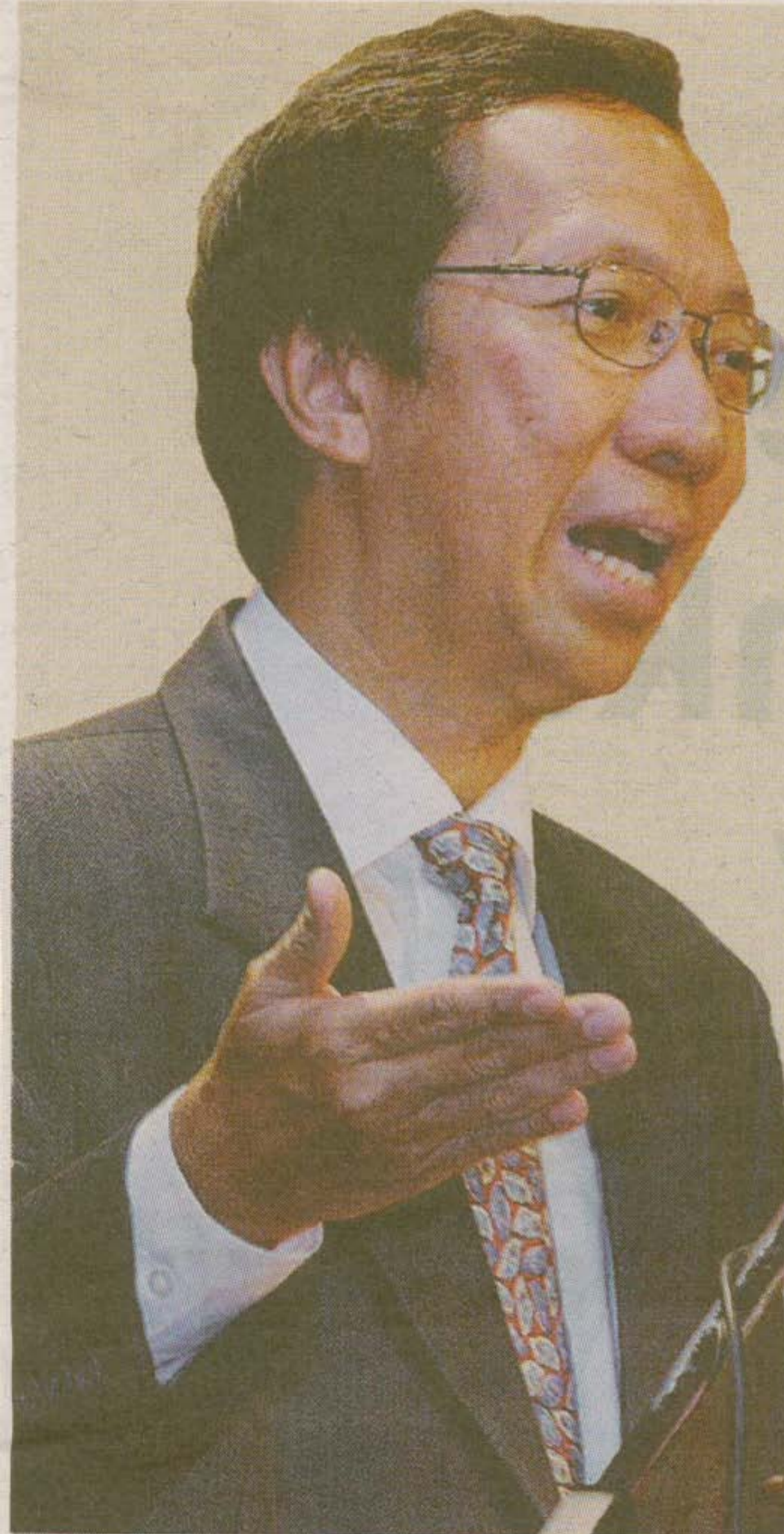


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How is it that Chan is not in the know?

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GEORGE TOWN, Mon. — Differences between Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon and Datuk Seri Chan Kong Choy go beyond politics: they are not even on the same page on a major transportation project planned for Penang.

The Penang Chief Minister (picture) is perplexed by the Transport Minister's lack of knowledge about the proposed RM1.1 billion light monorail transit (LMT) project on the island.

He told reporters today that while several senior government leaders knew about the project, this did not appear to be the case with Chan.

He said the project proposal was submitted to the Economic

Planning Unit under the Prime Minister's Department more than three years ago.

"Even Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi knows about the project.

"Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Mustapa Mohamed and head of the Department of Railway under the ministry are also aware of the project.

"In fact, many discussions were held over the years and I am made to understand that at least one of the Transport Ministry's representatives attended each of the meetings.

"How is it that Chan is not in the know? I suggest he gets feedback from his people."

Several Chinese dailies quoted Chan today as saying that he had yet to be informed about the pro-

ject.

Koh said he had advised the chief executive officer of the company that will undertake the project to brief Chan on the project.

"I have asked him to brief Chan on the rail project," he said.

The Malay Mail reported in May last year that MMC Metrail Sdn Bhd was in talks with the Federal Government to help implement the project in Penang with the Federal Government asking for a draft concession agreement.

It had quoted company chairman Datuk Abdul Kadir Deen as saying that Tunas Citra Sdn Bhd and Frazer-Nash held a 40 per cent stake each in Metrail while MMC Corp Bhd owned a 20 per cent stake.

Frazer-Nash is a UK-based company.

Kadir had said that Tunas Citra's role in Metrail was to raise the funds.

He had stated Metrail was in discussions on technical specifications with the Transport Ministry.

Metrail, which received a letter of exclusivity for the job on Oct 1, 2003, was told to start work on Phase 1A, involving 3.2km, as soon as the financial packaging was agreed upon.

Koh said that apart from the project's technical aspects, the other pending issue was the financing model.

The proposed rail project is expected to serve as an alternative mode of public transportation in the State.

Two routes have been proposed for a start with plans for a third.