

## **KL-Singapore rail plans could result in more bailouts, Pakatan warns**

**The Malaysian Insider**

**March 26, 2012**

**By Clara Chooi**

KUALA LUMPUR, March 26 — Pakatan Rakyat (PR) lawmakers today demanded Putrajaya subject its proposed plans for a rapid transit system (RTS), underwater tunnel and possible bullet train to Singapore to a stringent public consultation process before moving ahead with implementation.

The lawmakers expressed fear that the projects, if launched concurrently, would only turn into failed private initiatives, result in future bailouts and empty public coffers of billions of ringgit.

“How, while we are looking at a double-tracking rail project that has not even been completed, then we are looking at the RTS, and now we are talking also about the bullet train — how much money do we have right now?”

“I heard this is a PFI but I am quite sure, like many others... like the Klang Valley MRT when it was first mooted, it was claimed to be a private-funded initiative, driven by domestic investment... but finally, it is now undertaken and underwritten by the government,” Kuala Selangor MP Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad (picture) told a press conference in Parliament today.

He pointed out that the bullet train proposal, currently undergoing feasibility studies, had earlier been estimated to cost some RM30 billion, close to the estimated cost for the ongoing KVMRT project.

He said that although Putrajaya claimed today the high-speed rail project was not a “priority”, media reports from last year had already revealed the appointment of a consultant, which is expected soon.

“Today, we hear from the deputy minister that concurrent with that, Cabinet and the prime ministers from both sides (Singapore and Malaysia) are also discussing the RTS.

“We are not against making public transportation efficient but we are against the mad rush of having the RTS and the bullet train all together.

“We failed in the first round with our other rail systems... all privatised and then we bailed them out.

“So now we want it transparent and public consultation done early and not at the point of award because this will end up with the government sustaining an even greater debt,” he said.

Earlier during Question Time, deputy minister in the Prime Minister’s Department Datuk Ahmad Maslan told the House that the bullet train, although undergoing feasibility studies, was not a priority to the government, unlike the proposal for the RTS and underwater tunnel between KL and Singapore.

The deputy minister added that the RTS project would also include the construction of an

undersea tunnel, as mooted by the prime ministers of both countries.

"This is a result of discussions by the JMC or the joint ministerial committee.

"For the HSR or high-speed rail link (bullet train), the government is carrying out feasibility studies to determine the success and risks of such a project," he said, when replying to Teng Boon Soon (MCA-Tebrau).

To a question from Dzulkefly, Ahmad further explained that during three recent retreats involving the PMs of Malaysia and Singapore, only the proposal for the RTS had been discussed, including proposals for the undersea tunnel, ferry and water taxi services. "Our main priority is the RTS," he stressed.

Ahmad added that the cost for RTS would be borne evenly by Malaysia and Singapore, with construction estimated to begin in 2014 and completion scheduled for 2018.

The Malaysian Insider

Copyright © 2012 The Malaysian Insider

Source: <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/kl-singapore-rail-plans-could-result-in-more-bailouts-pakatan-warns/>