

Singapore Surprised By Malaysia's Preference To End HSR Terminus At Ciq Complex Bernama

June 19, 2015

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SINGAPORE, June 19 (Bernama) -- Singapore is "surprised" by Malaysia's Land Public Transport Commission's (SPAD) statement that it preferred to terminate the High Speed Rail (HSR) terminus at the CIQ (customs, immigration and quarantine) complex in Johor Baharu.

Responding to media queries, the Ministry of Transport (MOT) spokesman said the HSR project linking Kuala Lumpur and Singapore were agreed upon by both countries at the 2013 Leaders' Retreat, with studies conducted by both countries.

Last year, Malaysia decided to locate the Kuala Lumpur HSR terminus in Bandar Malaysia, while MOT said Singapore would have the terminus in Jurong East.

Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong informed his Malaysian counterpart Prime Minister Datuk Najib Tun Razak of this at this year's Singapore-Malaysia Leaders' Retreat, and the locations were also announced at a joint press conference by the both premiers after that.

"Our understanding is that Malaysia views the commercial premise of the Kuala Lumpur-Singapore HSR project, and with which we agree, as being based on a direct connection between the two city centres," the spokesperson said, adding that closing the Johor Baharu HSR terminus would not achieve this objective.

The spokesman said both sides were in discussions on the project's commercial and operating models.

"Singapore has proposed that the domestic transit HSR services will stop at six stations in Malaysia between Kuala Lumpur and Singapore.

"As they primarily serve commuters travelling within Malaysia, they should operate separately from the express non-stop HSR services between Kuala Lumpur and Singapore."

The spokesman said this would give Malaysia autonomy over the domestic transit services to serve Malaysia's domestic needs, while both countries work together on the cross-border HSR services.

On the Johor Baharu-Singapore Rapid Transit System (RTS) Link, the spokesman said both countries could only determine the type and alignment of the crossing after both terminus locations have been confirmed.

Singapore informed Malaysia in June 2011 that the terminus in Singapore would be located at the Woodlands North station of the Thomson-East Coast Line. However, the MOT has yet to receive official confirmation of the location of Malaysia's RTS terminus in Johor Baharu.

The spokesperson said contrary to what was said in the Malaysian media by Johor Public Works, Rural and Regional Development Committee Chairman Datuk Hasni Mohammad, there was no agreement with Malaysia that the crossing would be a high bridge.

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