

## **Liow: China, Japan first 2 confirmed bidders**

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KUALA LUMPUR: China and Japan are the two countries have so far confirmed participation in the international tender for the RM60 billion Kuala Lumpur-Singapore High-Speed Rail (HSR) project, said Transport Minister Dato' Sri Liow Tiong Lai.

"The international tender will close on June 29. Only then can we reveal the exact number of contenders. "As of now, China and Japan have openly confirmed their participation in the open tender," he said after the opening ceremony of the Malaysia-China SMEs Business Matching Conference 2018, here, yesterday.

Also present were China Ambassador to Malaysia Bai Tian, Chinese Enterprises Association in Malaysia president and Bank of China chief executive officer Wang Hong Wei, Associated Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Malaysia (ACCCIM) president Tan Sri Ter Leong Yap, ACCCIM secretary-general Datuk Low Kian Chuan and SME Association of Malaysia president Datuk Michael Kang.

On December 20, Malaysia's MyHSR Corp Sdn Bhd and Singapore's HSR Pvt Ltd announced they would start accepting bids for a railway 'assets company', which would be responsible for designing, building, financing, operating and maintaining all rail assets.

Bidders must submit their proposals to MyHSR Corp, which has been tasked to oversee the project. Second Finance Minister Datuk Seri Johari Abdul Ghani recently said the project would cost between RM50 billion and RM60 billion.

MyHSR Corp and Singapore's HSR will jointly select a qualified bidder by year end. On whether any Malaysian contractors had submitted bids to participate in the project, Liow said: "Let's wait until after June 29 when the tender closes."

Slated for completion by end-2026, the Kuala Lumpur-Singapore HSR system will have a maximum operating speed of 320kph and run on a double-track with a single gauge.

It will cut travelling time between the nations to 90 minutes, compared with the five-hour drive under normal traffic conditions.

The 350km HSR line will connect Bandar Malaysia to Putrajaya, Seremban, Melaka, Muar, Batu Pahat and Iskandar Puteri, before terminating at Jurong East in Singapore via a bridge over the Straits of Johor.