

Rail project ahead of time

Double-tracking stretch in Perak 90% complete

TAIPING: The Perak stretch of the 329km Ipoh-Padang Besar electrified double-tracking project is expected to be completed six months ahead of schedule.

"To date, the Perak stretch is 89.7% complete," said Transport Minister Datuk Seri Kong Cho Ha.

Kong said this at the ceremonial handing-over of six flyovers to the state Public Works Department in Kamunting, near here, yesterday.

They are part of 20 flyovers costing RM251 mil planned for Perak.

Kong said for the whole project, there would be 65 flyovers spanning over Perak, Penang, Kedah and Perlis, costing a total of more than RM1bil.

At a press conference later, he said with flyovers to replace level crossings, motorists would be saved from the hassle of waiting for trains to pass.

In **KOTA KINABALU**, Kong said in a statement that the cabotage policy requiring Malaysian ships to transport domestic cargo was not the reason for higher cost of goods in Sabah.

He said there were other factors that raised the cost of goods here, naming among them cost of storage and port services fees.

He dismissed claims that foreign ships were not allowed to sail into Sabah ports to unload containers after they had unloaded cargo at peninsula ports.

"This claim is wrong. The cabotage policy does not stop foreign ships from docking at any port in Malaysia," he said, explaining that after a foreign cargo ship docks at Port Klang, it is allowed to go to any Sabah port to unload cargo.

"Such ships can also load cargo and leave for any foreign destination," he added.