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George Kent forms consortium to bid for HSR project

A strong team comprising experienced partners to deliver and maintain the safest and most reliable HSR system

by **MARK RAO & RAHIMI YUNUS**

GEORGE Kent (M) Bhd and four multinational companies — Siemens AG, Alstom, Ferrovie dello Stato Italiane SpA and PORR AG, have formed a consortium to bid for the Kuala Lumpur (KL)-Singapore high-speed rail (HSR) project.

The five companies will look to provide engineering, procurement and construction, and operations and maintenance services as part of the tender for the rail project connecting Kuala Lumpur and Singapore, and smaller cities along the line in the west coast of Malaysia.

"George Kent has assembled a strong team and will be working together with experienced partners to deliver and maintain the safest and most reliable HSR system in the world," George Kent chairman Tan Sri Tan Kay Hock noted in a statement yesterday.

"We aim to facilitate technology transfer and maximise the local content, resources and



Pic by Alif Abd Halim

We aim to facilitate technology transfer and maximise the local content, says Tan

human capital in line with Malaysia's aspiration of developing a resilient and vibrant rail industry," he added.

George Kent share price closed the trading day one sen lower at RM3.76 on the release of the news.

Last October, the company announced it is partnering Siemens and Siemens Pte Ltd to prepare a bid for the development, financing, construction and technical operation and maintenance works for the HSR project.

The engineering and water meter maker also aims to facilitate technology transfer and maximise the local content, resources and human capital in line with Malaysia's aspira-

tion of developing a resilient and vibrant rail industry.

George Kent was involved in the second and third lines of the light rail transit project in Malaysia and was also the contractor for track work and maintenance for the second Mass Rapid Transit Sungai Buloh-Serdang-Putrajaya line.

Siemens and Alstom are technology manufacturers with experience in delivering cross-border HSR projects and have worked on similar private-public partnerships across the globe.

Italian state-owned rail networks operator, Ferrovie dello Stato Italiane, brings its expertise in railway operation to the team, George Kent added.

Austrian contractor PORR has experience in track work with a state-of-the-art slab track technology proven in operation on HSR.

Malaysia and Singapore called for a joint tender for an assets company for the KL-Singapore HSR project back in December last year.

Bidders will have until June 29 this year to submit their proposals for the project.

The HSR project, which will reduce the travel time between the two capitals to 90 minutes at operational speed of 320kph, has attracted interests from companies from Japan, South

Korea and China.

Japan, boasted by its Shinkansen technology, is eyeing the HSR contract estimated to cost more than RM50 billion.

The Japanese government is prepared to provide financial backing via public-private fund, Japan Overseas Infrastructure Investment Corp for Transport and Urban Development, to its companies like East Japan Railway Co and Sumitomo Corp, if they clinch the project.

Media reports suggest China Railway Corp is prepared to lead a consortium of Chinese companies to bid for the project.

South Korea's consortium led by Hyundai Rotem Co and Hyundai Engineering and Construction Co Ltd is expected to bid for the HSR project as well.

Local companies bidding for the multibillion-ringgit project include Gamuda Bhd-Malaysian Resources Corp Bhd joint venture and a four-party consortium consisting of IJM Corp Bhd, Sunway Construction Group Bhd, Jalinan Rejang Sdn Bhd and Maltimur Resources Sdn Bhd.

YTL Corp Bhd has teamed up with SIPP Rail Sdn Bhd to bid for the job, and Naza Group and China Communications Construction Co Ltd are said to jointly bid as well.