

Gemas-JB Rail Project to Spur Growth in Segamat, says PM

SEGAMAT: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said the implementation of the Gemas to Johor Baru electric double-tracking railway project will become a catalyst to further develop and transform Segamat district and Johor as a whole.

Najib said despite challenges at the initial stages, the government would give priority to the project in an ongoing effort to improve the quality of public transport. "That's why we give priority to this project and although there are certain challenges initially, we have reached the implementation stage," he said at the ground breaking of the Gemas-Johor Baru PLBE project here yesterday.

"This project will cover 197km of rail and pass through 11 stations and I'm confident economic activities will be further boosted." Najib, who is also finance minister, said he believed the project would bring many benefits, including enhancing bilateral ties between Malaysia and China, especially economically. "Our ties (Malaysia and China) and economic relations will be further strengthened with the implementation of this project," he said.

Apart from that, 99 per cent of the PLBE project works would involve local contractors, providing opportunities and economic spillovers to locals, said Najib. Besides benefitting consumers, he said travelling from Johor Baru to Kuala Lumpur Sentral would take only four hours while travelling from Johor Baru to Padang Besar, a distance of 915.7km, only took nine hours by the Electric Rail Service (ETS).

Also present at the event were Johor Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin, Transport Minister Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai and Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr S. Subramaniam, who is also Segamat MP.

The railway project which connects the southern part of Peninsular Malaysia complements the network system — Ipoh to Padang Besar sector, Rawang to Ipoh sector, Klang Valley sector and Seremban to Gemas sector — of the double tracking rail system.

Among the new stations to be built are at Bandar Segamat, Labis, Bekok, Paloh, Bandar Kluang, Renggam, Layang-Layang, Kulai and Kempas Baru. Meanwhile, Najib said the land public transport system is more efficient, modern and reliable now than it was during previous prime ministers.

He said the previous leader, despite helming the country for 22 years, did not give priority to land public transportation resulting in a disoriented system. Najib said the electric train service (RTS) had also become a popular mode of transportation especially for those residing in Tanjong Malim, as well as Ipoh, using the service for their daily travel.

"This shows the lifestyle in Malaysia is changing and when we stay in the rural areas, we get to buy a bigger house with a bigger compound at the same price," he said. — Bernama

