



**ETP: Najib takes swipe at naysayers  
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Behind the feel-good atmosphere of the official launch of the Economic Transformation Programme roadmap today, Prime Minister Najib Razak's message to naysayers remained stern.

"Stop these negative voices and wipe out those cynical smiles which have disheartened and killed our resolve."

Speaking to a full-house audience at the Putra World Trade Centre today, the Prime Minister warned that critics are merely "embroiled in empty discussions and verbal clashes", which are distractions from the focus of bringing Malaysia to a high-income status.

Among those most vocal of the ETP are opposition parliamentarians like DAP supremo Lim Kit Siang and the party's publicity secretary Tony Pua, who have called the programme a "pie in the sky".

The ambitious programme would require a total investment of RM1.3 trillion from private and public sector, with government contributing 8 percent, by 2020.

However, 32 percent of the 'private investment' will come from government-linked companies.

Najib added that critics should realise that he is putting his own neck on the line by announcing such a detailed programme.

"As a Prime Minister, I am taking a risk by spelling out all the details, including the targets and objectives in this lengthy roadmap.

"It is proof that the government is transparent and ready to fulfill its promises to the rakyat," he said.

In fact, he said, the eight entry-point project announced today, including one involving the construction of the six-star St Regis Hotel first proposed in 2008, is proof that the ETP is going somewhere.

"I am giving my personal commitment to ensure that every minister responsible to oversee the success of the entry-point projects and investments. This has been their KPI, and I have already done two six-monthly performance reviews so far," he said.

Other projects announced today include a premium brand outlet in Johor, spearheaded by Genting and the construction of five biomass plants, beginning with a RM124 million plant in Lahad Datu, Sabah.

High Speed Rail study to be completed this year

According to Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Idris Jala, another project that is definitely listed in the 131 entry point projects is the Kuala Lumpur-Singapore High Speed Rail.

That said, the project is only in its feasibility study phase which is expected to be completed at the end of the year.

"We will then embark on another more detailed study on the modalities in January or February next year.

"Once that is done we can submit the proposal to the Economic Council and the cabinet. Once it is approved we will approach the Singapore government," he said.

Among the details that need to be ironed out, he said, is whether the high speed rail will terminate in Johor or Singapore.

The project was first mooted by the private sector during former prime minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's tenure but was shelved for undisclosed reasons.

Its revival, albeit only in the initial studies stage, has garnered much interest among those keen on the idea of cutting travel time between the two cities to about two hours.

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