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## ERL and KTM fare cut for target groups, says Najib

ACKNOWLEDGING public anger over rail fare hikes, Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak has announced discounts of up to 50% for pupils, university students, the disabled and senior citizens using the Express Rail Link (ERL) and KTM Komuter.

The Prime Minister said he had directed KTM Berhad to cut KTM Komuter fares by 50% for school pupils and university students aged seven to 18.

Malaysia Students Discount Card (KADSIM) holders, the disabled and senior citizens using the ERL transit service would also

receive a 30% discount on their fares, he said.

Users of the ERL's Putrajaya sector would enjoy a reduction in the price of their monthly pass although he did not specify the quantum.

KTMB, Najib said, would announce further discounts on fares in the near future.

"I know people are angry and because of that, I want to announce that there are several measures which we will take," he said in his winding-up speech.

Express Rail Link Sdn Bhd (ERL) had recently announced an increase

in its fare for a one-way trip between KL Sentral and KL International Airport/KLIA2 from RM35 to RM55 effective next year.

Describing the hike as "steep", Najib said the agreement between the Government and ERL operator was signed back in 1997.

"It is a long term concession," said Najib, adding that the agreement was lopsided in favour of the operator, which is under YTL Corporation Bhd.

In the agreement, Najib said fares were determined not by actual traffic but projected traffic and that the

fares would go up every five years.

The Government, however, did not allow any raise for 14 years, something which he had also insisted since he became Prime Minister.

However, the Government, said Najib, must pay RM2.9bil in compensation as a result of not allowing the fare rise.

"We can renegotiate but that means we have to extend by another 30 years because the agreement has been signed.

"That is why I want to state here that I received on my shoulders the burden of legacy from the previous

administrations," he added.

On the rise in the prices of consumer goods, Najib said he had directed the Domestic Trade, Consumerism and Cooperatives Minister to beef up enforcement, adding that if necessary, the price control period for essential items might be extended.

Najib also addressed concerns raised by delegates on the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement, saying that during negotiations, he had made it very clear that the bumiputra agenda was a "red line" or no-go area for discussion.