

MRT And Other Entry Point Projects Will Boost Domestic Demand, Says Najib Bernama

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KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 15 (Bernama) -- The MY Rapid Transit (MRT) project and other Entry Point Projects (EPPs) would be able to boost domestic demand and provide the buffer for Malaysia's continued growth amid the increasingly uncertain global economy, says Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

"The MRT project will be one of the projects to provide a major impact to the country's economic growth by increasing domestic demand, which we would have to raise considering that the world economy is expected to further weaken this year and also in the coming year," he said.

Najib, who is also Finance Minister said this to Bernama when asked on whether a project of MRT size would be able to buffer the country's economy from the onslaught of the ongoing financial crisis in the United States and Europe.

Syarikat Prasarana Negara Bhd (Prasarana) has shortlisted 28 individual companies and joint-ventures that have qualified to bid for various civil engineering works for the elevated rail tracks, station construction and depot under the billion dollar MRT.

Prasarana last week had said the tenders comprising eight packages for the elevated civil engineering works, eight packages for the station building and two packages for the depot, would be offered in stages beginning from next month until December 2012.

Todate, 82 per cent of the 65 EPP initiatives with an investment of RM170 billion have already started.

The Prime Minister today visited Bernama in conjunction with the Breaking Fast with the media program hosted by the national news agency at Wisma Bernama here.

When asked on whether the government will be able to stick to the budget this year, he said, "We can defend our budget but our economic growth will be subjected to external demand as well. If the external economy falls by one per cent, the country's Gross Domestic Product will contract by 0.4 per cent."

For the first quarter this year, Malaysia's GDP grew 4.6 per cent compared with the year before.

Last Friday, Najib had expressed confidence that the country would be able to achieve its GDP target of 5.5 per cent to 6.0 per cent this year based on the high domestic demand versus a deteriorating external economy following the downgrading of US credit rating.

He, nevertheless had said that for Malaysia to achieve its GDP target, all parties would have to work harder including the private sector.

Asked on the second quarter GDP to be announced by Bank Negara Malaysia this Wednesday, Najib said, "For that, we would have to wait."

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