

Najib: China deal for Perak rail centre an investment beacon
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KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 24 — Putrajaya's agreement with a Chinese firm today to set up a rail centre in Batu Gajah, Perak reflects investor confidence in the country's economic stability and strength, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said today.

Putrajaya today signed a memorandum of arrangement (MoA) with the China Southern Rail (CSR) Group to set up the CSR rail centre in Batu Gajah to encourage and promote technical co-operation in advance railway engineering and technology.

"It is clear that the collaboration between our Ministry of Transport and CSR ZELC has been a successful partnership, and I believe the CSR rail centre will further bring benefits to the country," Najib said in his speech during the signing ceremony today here.

He was referring to CSR Group's subsidiary, CSR Zhuzhou Electric Locomotive Co Ltd (ZELC), which recently provided 38 sets of six-car trains for KTM Berhad's MyKomuter services. The firm has also been selected to supply 20 sets of six-car trains for the Ampang LRT extension line.

"I am certain that not only will the rail centre become the impetus to enhance the development in Batu Gajah, but it will also become the catalyst for growth of industries for railway technology in Malaysia," he added.

The signing ceremony today here was also witnessed by Transport Minister Datuk Seri Kong Cho Ha and Perak Mentri Besar Datuk Seri Dr Zambry Abdul Kadir.

Najib said that in ten years, it is anticipated that there will be a demand for another 250 units of rail cars and locomotives in Malaysia alone, while demand from ASEAN and the Middle East is expected to touch 2,900 units of new trains.

"Apart from this, maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) of trains is yet another opportunity waiting to be tapped as it is estimated that in five years approximately 1,350 trains will require MRO services," he said, adding it was timely for Malaysia to set up the rail centre.

"I have been informed that major rail players have described Malaysia as the new rail industry hot spot, with all the on-going projects as well as the government's study of the possibility of high speed rail."

The MoA with CSR Group will cover the key areas of railway engineering and technology, industrial resources on railway infrastructure, human resource development in railway engineering and any other areas of co-operation in advance railway engineering and technology to be mutually agreed upon.

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