

**Government To Spend RM160 Billion More For Rail-related Projects Towards 2020, Says Najib**  
**Bernama**  
**10 Sept, 2013**

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 10 (Bernama) -- The government expects to spend a staggering RM160 billion more for rail-related projects towards 2020, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak announced Tuesday.

Since 1990, the government had invested over RM50 billion, he said.

"Now, more than ever, we are seeing a massive expansion of the rail network in Asia, including in Malaysia.

"In a sense, it is a resurgence of rail, as rail not only helped build many nations in their fledgling years, but now there is renewed interest in rail," Najib, who is also Finance Minister, said when opening the International Conference and Exhibition Rail Business Asia 2013.

The global demand for passenger and freight rail equipment, infrastructures and related services had swelled from US\$169 billion in 2007 to a projection of US\$214 billion by 2016, he said quoting estimates by the Worldwatch Institute in Washington.

He said the rail industry's growth in the country was a huge responsibility for the government, industry players and agencies like the Construction Industry Development Board, Land Public Transport Commission and Malaysian Industry-Government Group for High Technology (MIGHT).

Najib expressed confidence that Malaysia could succeed and achieve excellence in the rail business while improving the mobility of its citizens in a sustainable manner.

He said the combination of research and development efforts, technology transfer, skilled workers and learning from advanced rail countries would support the industry's growth.

"We need to update knowledge in all aspects of rail construction and systems, from station management, to scheduling, monitoring, as well as ticketing system.

"Once a dying industry, railroads have made a strong comeback and are poised to become busier passageways in the years ahead," he said.

Najib said railroads suffered in the past because they remained relatively less convenient and less flexible than lorries and trucks but in an era of scarcity and pressure on costs there has been a growing focus on efficiency which the rail has the strength.

He also said railways generate and spread prosperity, create jobs and open new markets and support economic growth.

"The multipliers from a thriving and vibrant rail network have been tremendous as proven in the past and is still apparent today," he added.

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Source: <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v7/newsindex.php?id=976638>