

**Najib's Proactive Initiatives Crucial In Addressing Current Economy - Expert
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KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 27 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak's proactive initiatives in reducing government operating costs and reviewing spending priorities were important steps in addressing the current economic situation.

Economics analyst Prof Datuk Mohd Yusof Kasim said reducing expenditure on non-critical assets and focusing on development investments, particularly in mega-projects could strengthen the national economy.

"Firstly, the development of infrastructure projects will create many employment opportunities which will generate income for the people.

"Secondly, we must also improve public transport facilities in line with the government's intention to promote the use of public transport by 2020," he said when contacted by BERNAMA.

On Jan 20, Najib announced operating expenditure was expected to be reduced by RM5.5 billion, and emphasis would be only on the real necessities while development expenditure provided in Budget 2015 of RM48.5 billion would remain unchanged.

He said projects for the people's economy such as public housing, flood mitigation, water supply, electricity, and public transport infrastructure such as the Pan-Borneo Highway, MRT Line 2, LRT 3, the High-Speed Rail Kuala Lumpur-Singapore and Rapid in Pengerang would be continued.

According to Mohd Yusof, who is also Rector of Kolej Universiti Insaniah (KUIN), to achieve operating expenditure savings of RM 5.5 billion, government agencies should follow the way private companies save on costs.

"We need to apply what we call creativity index, something that we spend on must provide a high impact on our organisation while expenditure on items of no great importance to be postponed," he said.

Mohd Yusof was confident that Malaysia would be able to achieve a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of between 4.5 to 5.5 percent this year and recommended hypermarkets promote goods from the villages and rural areas.

He said the move would help rural residents to increase their income besides promoting local products throughout the country.

"In this way, despite the uncertain economy, we still have many opportunities to generate

growth at national, household or institution level," he said.

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