

## **Najib blames Dr Mahathir's administration for unpopular ERL price hike**

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**By Anisah Shukry**

*Umno president Datuk Seri Najib Razak today said he was aware that people are unhappy with the controversial Express Rail Link (ERL) train price hike which will take effect next year, but blamed it on a "one-sided" concession agreement signed in 1997.*

In his winding-up speech, Najib said it was a long-term concession and he accepted the "legacy problem", but stressed that he was against the ERL price hike.

"People are angry because the fare has risen from RM35 to RM55. But gentlemen, you do not know, the agreement was signed in 1997. Not this year. 1997. Long-term concession.

" 'My way or no way'," Najib said, in an apparent reference to Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who was the prime minister in 1997.

"It was signed in 1997 with YTL Corporation. I would describe the agreement as one-sided. The fare is based only on projected traffic, and in the agreement it must rise every five years."

He said the federal government did not allow it to rise every five years when he became prime minister, and that was why the fare remain unchanged for 14 years.

But he said that Putrajaya was now forced to concede to the [fare hike](#), as it would otherwise have to pay RM2.9 billion in compensation to ERL Sdn Bhd, in which YTL Corporation is a major shareholder.

However, he assured members that he would "fix" this because he knew people were angry, and proceeded to announce a slew of discounts for students, the disabled, the elderly and civil servants.

"Students who use the Kad Siswa 1Malaysia will receive a 30% discount for the ERL transit service, and so will the handicapped and senior citizens too.

"For Putrajaya's civil servants, ERL agreed to reduce the price of its monthly passes."

Najib said he had also ordered national railway operator Keretapi Tanah Melayu Berhad (KTMB) to provide 50% discounts for its tickets to students below 18 years of age, while university students only had to flash their student cards to be eligible for the same discount.

He said KTMB had also been directed to announce further discounts. –  
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