

Malaysia-Thailand Agree To Initiate Study on KL-Bangkok HSR

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BANGKOK, Sept 9 (Bernama) -- Malaysia and Thailand have agreed to start initial study on the possibility of introducing the High Speed Rail (HSR) between Kuala Lumpur and Bangkok, said Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak today.

The Malaysian Prime Minister said, the agreement between both neighbouring countries for the initial study on HSR was in line with the ASEAN Masterplan for Connectivity.

"We (Malaysia and Thailand) agree to set the motion for a possible HSR between Kuala Lumpur and Bangkok to complement the proposed HSR between Kuala Lumpur and Singapore."

"We believe increased connectivity will advance the economies of both countries and people to people relations of Malaysia and Thailand," he said here.

Najib said this in a joint media conference with his Thai counterpart Gen Prayut Chan-o-cha after the conclusion of the annual consultation between Malaysia and Thailand at the Government House, here.

The HSR project between Kuala Lumpur and Singapore is expected to cut travel time to 90 minutes and scheduled to kick off next year.

Najib also said, he and Prayut had agreed to work hard towards achieving the target to increase bilateral trade between Malaysia and Thailand to US\$30 billion in 2018.

Currently, bilateral trade between both nations stood at US\$22 billion with Thailand remaining as Malaysia's second largest trading partner in ASEAN.

Both leaders, he said, had also agreed to expedite the construction of the Rantau Panjang-Sungai Golok and Pengkalan Kubor-Takbai bridges from 2018 to the middle of next year.

The Prime Minister of both countries, he said, had also agreed to upgrade the expansion of Sadao-Bukit Kayu Hitam customs complex to facilitate better border trade between the two countries.

Najib also said, Malaysia would maintain Thailand as one of its major source of rice imports, with 40 percent of a million metric tonnes of rice imports coming from Thailand.

A study would be carried out to explore the possibility of using land routes for rice imports from Thailand, he said, adding that it must not create smuggling problems.

Thailand's prime minister, he said, had also proposed that both tourism authorities collaborated in joint tourism promotions.

Najib said, both leaders had a successful and fruitful annual consultation this year, but the discussion needed to be followed up with effective implementation.

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