

## **Govt saves RM300 bln from cancellation of three mega projects -- Tun M**

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SHAH ALAM, Oct 22 (Bernama) -- The cancellation of the East Coast Rail Line (ECRL), Kuala Lumpur-Singapore High-Speed Rail and Trans-Sabah Gas Pipeline projects could help reduce the government's debt burden by more than RM300 billion, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

The Prime Minister said the projects were too costly to be funded by the government, while their development plans did not match the expectations of returns to recover the debts incurred.

"In the past, if we were to execute plans, we ensured that we had enough money. If we did not have enough money, we determined how much was the debt level (and) how much could be repaid from the return on investment, that's the best way," he said at the "Bicara Minda" with Tun Dr Mahathir talk show hosted by Sinar Harian here today.

He said this principle was not practised by the previous government which incurred huge debts to carry out mega infrastructure projects without considering the ability to repay them.

The Prime Minister said the government only scrapped projects that did not give problems to the people.

For example, he said in the case of the ECRL project, money was borrowed on the condition that a foreign company would be given the contract.

"Foreign workers were brought in, while equipment and tools were all made by a foreign country, So what do we get? We've got nothing.

"If we were to cancel these projects, the victims are their workers are not ours. So, we'd cancelled them so that we do not have to pay huge debts," he said.

On the third national car project, Dr Mahathir said it would be a catalyst to win people's interest on the importance of mastering engineering and manufacturing knowledge.

"A car has 4,000 parts. If we want to make a car, we have to know about designing, testing, parts and quality. We have to learn all these.

"When a nation controls engineering knowledge, its people will go forward," he said.

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