

Ipoh-Padang Besar rail project may be revived

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PUTRAJAYA: The Ipoh to Padang Besar double-tracking rail project, which was deferred in 2003, may be revived.

The Economic Planning Unit (EPU) is undertaking a feasibility study and will make its recommendations to the Cabinet Committee on Transport in the next two months.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said if the committee agreed with the proposal, it would be submitted to the Cabinet

for a final decision.

"The project will be a full private funding initiative by MMC-Gamuda. We were briefed today by MMC-Gamuda, its bankers and consultants," Najib said after chairing a committee meeting yesterday.

"The EPU has been asked to look into this proposal and to revert to the committee within two months."

In December 2003, the Ipoh-Padang Besar and Seremban-Johor Baru double-tracking projects were put on hold to reduce the nation's budget deficit.

Najib also said the committee had, in principle, approved a rail service from the Kuala Lumpur International Airport terminal to the low-cost carrier terminal.

"The Transport Ministry has received many complaints on connections between the two buildings. The new train will reduce the 20 minutes travel time by bus to 11 minutes.

"The EPU will study whether the estimated RM150 million project should be 100 per cent government-funded or not."

The EPU will look into the cost factor in consultation with the

Transport, Finance and Works ministries.

Yesterday, the committee also approved a study on a master plan for public transport in major towns and cities.

Its purpose is to determine the state of the country's public transport system.

"It is also to match development with targets that we hope to achieve, such as passenger comfort and future planning in main towns and cities.

"Following the appointment of a consultant, we expect the study to be ready in nine months."