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NEW TOLL RATES FAIR, SAYS MAHATHIR

Mahathir-toll

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PULAU REDANG, July 16, (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the new toll rates announced by Projek Lebuhraya Utara-Selatan (Plus) yesterday will not pose a burden to motorists as the rates are still reasonable.

He said that the new rates had to be imposed to meet the escalating costs of constructing the North-South Highway.

Approval for toll rate increases was covered by the concession agreement between the government and Plus, he told reporters here.

+We can still afford (the new toll rates) if not instigated by Lim Kit Siang (DAP Secretary-General),+ he said, adding that he was certain that the opposition would exploit the issue.

Plus announced yesterday 50 per cent increases in toll rates -- from five sen per kilometre to 7.5 sen per kilometre -- to be imposed from Jan 1, next year up to December 1995.

He said that if Lim wanted to prepare lower toll rates, +we can leave it to him to construct roads and impose rates, if he wants.+ -- more

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Mahathir-toll 2 (last) Pulau Redang

Earlier, Dr Mahathir and his delegation spent two hours visiting the large-scale tourism project site on the island.

He observed the preventive measures taken by the developer, Redang Island Resort (RIR), to ensure that the development of the \$340-million project did not affect the environment.

RIR is in its first phase of development. An 18-hole golf course and 250-room chalets are being developed on the island, expected to be completed in July next year.

Dr Mahathir was accompanied by Menteri Besar Tan Sri Wan Mokhtar Ahmad, Public Enterprises Minister Datuk Dr Yusof Nor, Deputy Primary Industries Minister Datuk Tengku Mahmud Mansor, RIR Executive Chairman Datuk Mohamed Anuar Embong and Berjaya Corporation Executive Chairman Tan Sri Vincent Tan.

-- Bernama

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