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Mahathir-Highway

NORTH-SOUTH HIGHWAY A PRIVATISATION SUCCESS, SAYS MAHATHIR

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KUALA LUMPUR, Feb. 7 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the completion of the North-South Highway today was proof that the government's privatisation policy was highly beneficial to the people.

Commending Projek Lebuhraya Utara-Selatan (PLUS) for completing the work 15 months ahead of schedule, he said the highway would bring gains for everyone.

"I congratulate PLUS for succeeding in speeding up construction by more than a year than scheduled and this is a success," he told reporters after attending a briefing on the Malaysian Industries-Government High Technology (MIGHT) group at the Prime Ministers Department.

The 890-km highway from Bukit Kayu Hitam at the Kedah-Thailand to Johor Baharu was fully completed with the opening of the final 30.3 km stretch between Tapah and Gopeng by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong today.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia needed aggressive companies like PLUS to implement privatised projects in the country. -- more

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Mahathir-Highway 2 (last) Kuala Lumpur

The project would not have been completed on schedule and might even have been delayed if it was undertaken by the government which was not too concerned with income from the project, he added.

"This proves how privatisation brings much benefit to the people... besides PLUS, for example, we also stand to profit a lot from taxes and from those taxes we can spend on the public, so the public does not suffer any loss," he said.

He said the government would monitor toll rates imposed by PLUS on highway users to ensure they were reasonable.

"Actually, toll rates in this country are far lower compared with that in other countries where the type and quality of roads are more or less the same," he added.

Taking into account the quality of roads in Malaysia and the savings compared with other countries that have the toll system, the users in those countries pay far more, he said.

Car-owners need only pay a total of RM66.75 in toll to travel from Bukit Kayu Hitam to Kempas in Johor Baharu, calculated at a toll rate of 7.5 sen a kilometre. -- Bernama

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