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72 trees at highway site to be relocated

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KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - Thanks to the national greening campaign and the pledge by Works Minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu, 72 trees along Jalan Tun Razak will be spared the axe of a highway developer and placed in another area.

Threatened by the construction of the RM1.2 billion dedicated highway linking Kuala Lumpur with Putrajaya and the Kuala Lumpur International Airport in Sepang which begins at that point, the trees will now be relocated rather than destroyed.

A visit to the area by the New Straits Times revealed that the trees, mostly jambu laut (*Eugenia grandis*) with four Flame of the Forest or semarak api (*Delonix regia*) trees, were located on the median of Jalan Tun Razak from the Kampung Pandan roundabout to the Jalan Inai intersection.

The leafy trees form a serene green corridor along the busy Jalan Tun Razak.

Samy Vellu's pledge on the 72 trees was made yesterday after he announced that the Cabinet had approved the proposed revised routes for the highway.

The Cabinet decided that the highway should include Jalan Tun Razak, Kampung Pandan, Jalan Cheras, Jalan Kuchai Lama, Salak South and Bukit Jalil, said Samy Vellu.

He said the Malaysian Highway Authority and the project consultants had identified 72 trees which would have to make way for the project.

He also said his ministry had consulted the Forest Research Institute of Malaysia which gave the assurance that the trees could be transplanted.

The consortium undertaking the project, Konsortium Lapangan Terjaya Sdn Bhd, will be made responsible for the 72 trees even after they have been transplanted.

He said the replanting process would take about three months as the consortium would have to find suitable areas for the trees.

The pledge was made as part of the national greening campaign which was launched by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on Monday.

In a related development, the president of the Petaling Jaya Residents Association, S. Rajalingam, said its members welcomed the Government's efforts to promote the planting of trees.

"Such campaigns should be ongoing and not done on an ad hoc basis," he said in a statement faxed to the New Straits Times today.

Rajalingam said the main culprits who caused the disappearance of trees were developers and contractors.

The lack of enforcement by local authorities too, according to him, has contributed to the unfortunate situation.

"If the authorities had strictly enforced the Town and Country Planning Act (Amendment Act 1995), thousand of trees would have been saved, making such greening campaigns unnecessary," he said.

Rajalingam added that the association would support any programme initiated by the municipal council on the preservation of greenery in Petaling Jaya.

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