

23 FEB 1997

Samy-EIA

ADDITIONAL RM2 MILLION FOR EIA STUDY ON AMBITIOUS HIGHWAY PROJECT

MELAKA, Feb 23 (Bernama) -- The government has increased by RM2 million the allocation for the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) study on the proposed highway linking the peninsula's three highland resorts -- Genting Highlands, Cameron Highlands and Fraser's Hill.

Works Minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu said today the move to boost the amount to RM3.5 million from the initial RM1.5 million proved the government was serious in ensuring minimal environmental damage to the areas affected by the project.

He said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had explained clearly the government's stand on the project.

The government would not shirk its responsibility to preserve the environment in going ahead with the project which also enabled the people to enjoy the environmental beauty in its original setting and the cool breeze of the highland, he said.

The government had always ensured that environmental damage was kept to the minimum when carrying out new projects, he told reporters after opening the Malaysian Tamil Youth Bell Club's annual delegates conference at Ayer Keroh here.

Samy Vellu said it was a standard practice to take into account the environmental impact of every development project undertaken by the government particularly involving forests and highlands.

He said the government was prepared to spend big sum of money to ensure the projects did not cause serious damages to the environment.

"We do not want minor problems leading to cancellation of development projects," he said.

Samy Vellu also said his ministry had received many proposals from private companies to participate in the coastal highway project from Banting in Selangor to Gelang Patah in Johor.

He said the proposed highway passing through Morib in Selangor, Port Dickson in Negeri Sembilan and Melaka was being studied by the Economic Planning Unit (EPU) in the Prime Minister's Department.

EPU was vetting the applications to ensure the companies had the financial resources and expertise to undertake the project, he said, adding that the successful bidder would be decided in three months.

In his speech, Samy Vellu, who is MIC president, urged Indian youth organisations to keep up with the country's rapid growth.

He said Malaysia required skilled personnel and expertise in science and technology and not rubber tappers or estate labourers.

Also present were Deputy Transport Minister Datuk Wira Mohamed Ali Rustam, who is also president of 4B Youth and World Assembly of Youth (WAY) and State MIC chairman R. Raghavan. -- BERNAMA

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