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Anti-inflation campaigns will go on, says Tan

Fadzil Ghazali

THE Government-initiated anti-inflation campaigns will be continued in view of the positive influence they have in preventing the depreciation of the ringgit from worsening the country's inflation rate.

Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Ministry Parliamentary Secretary Tan Chai Ho said, with strong support from the public towards such campaigns, prices of goods and the ringgit's value should stabilise at proper levels.

Replying to a question by Mr Lim Siang Chai (BN-Petaling Jaya Selatan), Tan said the objective of the anti-inflation and zero-inflation campaigns is to reduce the country's inflation at the lowest possible level.

The campaign is focussed on basic goods and services, particularly those consumed by lower income groups. It involves educating the public continuously on the danger of having an unmanageable inflation rate.

* THE Government plans to amend the existing Road Transport Act of 1987 to make the law more effective, particularly in the area of enforcement.

Deputy Home Minister Datuk Ong Ka Ting said at present, the ministry is liaising with various ministries on this matter.

"The proposed amendments will further tighten the law and weed out possible loopholes," he said in reply to a question by Encik Yunus Rahmat (BN-Jelebu).

Ong said the Home Ministry, together with the Transport Ministry and the Attorney General Chamber's, will do its best to make the new law more effective and in line with current demands.

* A TOTAL of 536,900 teak-wood trees costing RM18.7 million has been planted along the North-South Highway, Deputy Works Minister Datuk Railey Jeffrey said.

Replying to a question by Encik Hamzah Ramli (BN-Sri Gading), he said seven companies were given contracts to plant teak-wood trees along the 848km highway, stretching from Bukit Kayu Hitam to Johor Baru.

Railey said the objective of the project is to make the highway greener, prevent landslides, as well as optimise the use of idle grounds.

He also said that toll rates at four new highways under construction will be low to enhance usage.

The highways are Damansara-Puchong, Sungai Klang and Sungai Ampang elevated highways, Shah Alam Expressway and Nilai-KLIA Highway.

But, toll rates will be subject to final discussion with parties involved in these projects, he said in reply to Mr Lim Guan Eng (DAP-Kota Melaka).

To a question by Dr Yap Yit Thong (BN-Lumut), Railey said the proposed Putrajaya-Puchong-Petaling Jaya Expressway has been struck off with the implementation of the Damansara-Puchong Highway.

The RM765 million Damansara-Puchong Highway, expected to be completed in three years, has been given 33 years concession from 1996.

The Sungai Klang and Sungai Ampang Elevated Highways costing RM615 million will be completed within three years while the Shah Alam Expressway costing RM1,565 million will all have 33 years concession from 1996.

The Nilai-KLIA (Kuala Lumpur International Airport) costing RM77 million was opened on October 16. It has 22 years concession.

* OPPOSITION leader Mr Lim Kit Siang (DAP-Tanjong) yesterday risked from being suspended from the House following his outburst when Deputy Speaker Ong Tee Kiat terminated Lim's debate time on the Supply Bill 1998.

Lim claimed that his 10 minutes to debate on the Bill was not fully utilised at committee stage, and that the Deputy Speaker's action was undemocratic and a violation of Lim's privilege as an MP.

Pleading to the Deputy Speaker to "extend" his time limit so that he could share with the House a quote from Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, the DAP secretary-general said that this would only take a while.

To this, Ong replied that he would not allow it regardless of the person in question and that the time allotted to him has been exhausted.

The deputy speaker's remark resulted in Lim making an outburst, and he continued talking despite various warnings from Ong who in the end described the Opposition leader's tantrum as "disgraceful".

Lim, who has always been strongly vocal in criticising the Government's policies and actions, had previously been suspended for nine months.

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