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Jelutong Expressway will be built at no cost to taxpayers

PENANG, Tues. - The RM300 million Jelutong Expressway linking Penang Bridge and Georgetown will be built at no cost to taxpayers and users will not have to pay toll.

The builder, Jelutong Development Sdn Bhd, instead paid the State Government RM1.3 million upon signing the project concessionary agreement today.

It will pay the State a further RM24.1 million in instalments within three-and-a-half years.

State Secretary Datuk Jamaluddin Ahmad Damanhuri, on behalf of the State Government, and JDSB director Krishnan Tan signed the agreement.

The signing was witnessed by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon and his deputy Datuk Mohd Shariff Omar.

Koh said today's agreement marked another commitment by the State to upgrade and develop the infrastructure. The 4.7km Jelutong Expressway will join the already completed 9.2km Bayan Lepas Expressway, stretching from Penang Bridge to Batu Maung, built by the Penang Development Corporation at RM90 million.

Completion of these two mega road projects will resolve much of the traffic dispersal problems here, Koh said, adding that the State was also drafting the traffic dispersal master plans for both the island and Seberang Prai.

The Bayan Lepas Expressway was originally planned by the Federal Government as part of the traffic dispersal scheme for the island.

But PDC took over the construction in view of the urgent need to cope with increasing traffic demand.

Dr Mahathir officially opened the Bayan Lepas Expressway and also launched the Jelutong Expressway project, which has been delayed for a decade.

Tan, who is also IJM Corporation Berhad group managing director, said JDSB would design and construct the Jelutong Expressway within three years in exchange for the right to develop 129.96ha of mostly reclaimed land along the expressway.

It will cost RM300 million to compensate squatters and acquire land. The company would also bear the cost of reclaiming land along the project site, he said.

There will be five interchanges along the Jelutong Expressway at the junctions to Pengkalan Weld/Jalan Dr Lim Chwee Leong, to Gat Lebu Macallum, Jalan Sungai Pinang, Jalan Tan Sri Teh Ewe Lim (in Batu Lancang) and Jalan Udini.

Tan also said JDSB would build 5,500 low- and low medium-cost houses and 4,000 other types of residential homes on the development site in support of the Government's effort to provide the people with affordable housing.

Earlier, Koh said about 2,300 families would be affected by the Jelutong Expressway project.

The houses to be built by JDSB were for the displaced families as well as others affected by the Rent Control Act (Repeal), he said.

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