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Last concrete slab placed in a low-key celebration

JOHOR BARU, Wed. - The final slab of concrete connecting the 2.3km bridge between Malaysia and Singapore was put in place today.

This means there is now a second physical link between Malaysia and Singapore, apart from the existing Causeway.

But work on the Second Crossing is far from over. A great deal more has to be done before the bridge is opened to motorists in October.

Today's laying of the final concrete segment was a relatively low-key affair, except for a small banner announcing the completion of the physical link between the two countries.

About 30 workers and engineers who supervised the lowering of the last 100-tonne pre-cast slab by crane into place, threw their safety helmets into the air as a mark of jubilation over the successful completion of the job.

But the actual celebrations will have to wait. This has been fixed for later this year when Prime Ministers Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Goh Chok Tong will officially open the Second Crossing.

A ceremony to mark the completion of the physical link between the two neighbours has also been scheduled for July 31, which will be jointly officiated by Works Minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu and his Singapore counterpart Lim Hng Kiang.

Work on the RM299 million bridge began in October 1994. It is being built by Linkedua (M) Bhd, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Renong Berhad.

More than 20 contractors, under the supervision of Ranhill Acer of the United Kingdom, Shimizu Corporation of Japan and Pengurusan Lebuhraya Bhd, were involved in the construction of the bridge.

The project is unique in that it uses the balanced cantilever technique, which is new to this region.

The method was specially chosen by the developer to meet the completion deadline of the project.

The bridge will be able to accommodate 200,000 cars per day, four times more than the traffic volume on the Causeway.

The bridge which spans across the Tebrau Straits has a maximum vertical navigational clearance of 25 metres, which is enough for the smooth passage of large ships.

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