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PM-Highway

PM WANTS HIGHLAND HIGHWAY TO BE SPEEDED UP

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 26 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad wants work on the highland highway to be speeded up as any delay will lead to increase in costs.

"The Government is waiting for the EIA report and we hope it can be ready earlier," he said after chairing the weekly Cabinet Meeting at the Bukit Tinggi Resort near Janda Baik, about 65KM from here.

The Prime Minister said there were efforts to deliberately delay the project which would in turn make it uneconomical in view of spiralling costs and in the end the project would end up in failure.

The 200KM long highway will link Genting Highlands, Fraser's Hill and Cameron Highlands -- the three hill resorts on the peninsula's Main Range.

The Department of Environment (DOE) is in the final stages of preparing the EIA.

The Prime Minister, who is equally concerned about the country's environment, had said the highway would be implemented with minimum damage to hills.

Works Minister, Datuk Seri S Samy Vellu, said the highway project would be implemented once the EIA report was ready.

Work in the project could begin in about a month but did not say when it would be completed as the hilly terrain and thick forest would have to be taken into account.

"We'll have to wait for the EIA report then we can project when it can be completed," he said.

Samy Vellu said the main contractor for the project would be advised not to take a big forest area for the highway route but just what was necessary for the highway.

"In the past, some half a mile was taken up for a project of this kind but now we just take the bare minimum," he said.

Trees would be felled along the highway route and would be limited to one or two chains, Samy Vellu said. -- BERNAMA

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