

28 MAR 1998

Toll

FURTHER LOWERING OF SECOND CROSSING TOLL?

IPOH, March 28 (Bernama) -- Works Minister Datuk Seri S Samy Vellu has not ruled out the possibility of a further lowering of the toll rates for the presently under-utilised Malaysia-Singapore second road link to attract more traffic to use it.

Although he declined to elaborate, Samy Vellu said the matter would be discussed soon in the next round of talks with Linkedua (M) Sdn Bhd, the developer and operator of the multi-billion ringgit second crossing.

"There appears to be a lot of problems with the second crossing," he told reporters here after officiating at a charity dinner last night.

The ministry was going through the various grouses of the company, he said.

It was surprising, he said, that the second link has yet to catch on with the traffic.

This called for investigation and new efforts to encourage more users rather than being boycotted by them, he said.

Traffic preferred to continue using the Johor Baharu-Woodlands Causeway despite having to endure hours of severe congestion and long queues on ends.

Samy Vellu recently announced that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his Singapore counterpart Goh Chok Tong are scheduled to jointly open the second crossing on April 18.

Traffic had been allowed to use the second link toll-free since Jan 2 until March 17 when toll rates ranging from RM1 for motorcycles, RM4.50 for cars, RM4.10 for taxis to RM25.50 for big lorries and trailers have been levied on the Malaysian side.

"It would be quite normal to see lukewarm response from traffic in the first and second week. But it is already two months now and the second link does not seem to be popular," he said.

Malaysia and Singapore jointly built the second crossing, linking Tanjung Kupang in Johor and Tuas in the republic.

Toll on the Singapore side ranged from S\$0.50 for motorcycles, S\$2.50 for cars, S\$3 for buses to S\$12 for big lorries. (S\$=RM2.30).-- BERNAMA

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