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Samy-Toll

GOVT DEFERS TOLL COLLECTION AT KL-KARAK HIGHWAY

KUALA LUMPUR, May 27 (Bernama) -- The Government has agreed to defer until June 15 the toll collection at the upgraded KL-Karak Highway, Works Minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu said today.

He said the decision was made in today's weekly Cabinet meeting after considering public protests and proposals by several parties.

The Government had announced a six-fold rise in toll charges for the RM1.5 billion highway.

Samy Vellu said the government today agreed to reduce the toll rates announced earlier and would compensate MTD Prime Sdn Bhd, the highway concessionaire, for the losses incurred.

He said the government had also deferred June 1 as the effective date for toll collection pending negotiations with MTD Prime.

He said the new rates would be lower than those announced by him recently.

Effective June 1, motorists were required to pay RM4.20 (previously RM1.90) at the Gombak toll plaza and RM2.40 (50 sen) at the Bentong toll plaza, which accounted for a six-fold increase.

Samy Vellu said the Cabinet would decide on the collection date and the new toll rates after he tabled a working paper on the proposed rates next week.

He said the government decided to defer the toll collection following public protests and views expressed by various parties including the Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the owner of the Genting Highlands Resort.

He said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad instructed him to look into the public protests after the Cabinet discussed the issue last week.

He said he held talks with the management of MTD Prime, which had been awarded a 30-year concession to collect toll on the 60km highway.

On the compensation to be paid to MTD Prime, Samy Vellu said it would be based on the total toll collection a year, new toll charges and losses incurred due to reduced rates.

He said the owner of Genting Highlands Resort need not pay compensation borne by the government as the company had built a public road without claiming any money from the government.

-- BERNAMA

NHD TS