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PM, Goh to jointly open Second Link on April 18

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THE second Malaysia-Singapore crossing will be jointly opened next month by the Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his Singapore counterpart Goh Chok Tong.

The opening ceremony, which is scheduled for April 18, was agreed by both premiers, Works Minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu said yesterday.

Singapore and Malaysia jointly developed the second crossing with the Republic building 0.3km stretch of a 2km bridge at a cost of S\$600 million (S\$1 = RM2.29). Malaysia built the other 1.7km, including a six-lane highway linking the bridge to the North-South Expressway at a cost of RM1.2 billion.

The Second Link connecting Tanjung Kupang in Johor and Tuas in Singapore was opened to public on January 2 but toll collection only began on Tuesday.

Malaysia is charging RM4.80 for cars, RM11.40 for vans and small lorries, RM25.50 for big lorries and trailers, RM4.10 for taxis, RM6.20 for buses and RM1 for motorcycles.

The rates were 25 per cent to 48 per cent lower than those originally proposed in the agreement with the project developer and concessionaire, Linkedua (M) Sdn Bhd.

Singapore's toll charges for the Second Link are S\$0.50 for motorcycles, S\$2.50 for cars, S\$6 for vans/small lorries, S\$12 for big lorries, S\$2 for taxis and S\$3 for buses.

Asked if there will be a revision to the toll rates after protests from transport companies, Samy Vellu said "there is no proposal to reduce the toll rates."

He spoke to reporters after witnessing the signing of agreement for the privatization of management of Federal government common-user buildings in Kuala Lumpur.

Businesses, he said, might even make better profits with faster turnaround time as the Second Link is accessible, comfortable and faster.

"It takes about three hours from Johor Baru to Singapore on the old road but only 20 minutes using the new link," he said.

The Government will also be spending about RM40 million to improve the conditions of the roads from Kulai to Johor Baru.

"We are building some interchanges such as in Tampoi. The sign boards will also be improved as there are places where there are inadequate directions leading to Kuala Lumpur or into the highways from small towns nearby," he said, adding that there are no plans to increase the toll rates on the first link.

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