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PLUS TO OPTIMISE FACILITIES ALONG NORTH-SOUTH HIGHWAY

By: Mohd Rizal Razalli

KUALA LUMPUR, April 25 (Bernama) -- Projek Lebuhraya Utara Selatan Bhd (Plus), the North South Highway concessionaire, does not plan to increase the rest and service (R&S) areas along the 848km-long highway but will instead optimise these facilities.

Its managing director Ikmal Hijaz Hashim said the company would also upgrade the existing facilities and look at the potential of upgrading all the lay-bys.

"The lay-bys just have public facilities right now, we may put in better facilities like more eating spaces," he told Bernama after the launching of Plus's overhead bridge restaurant at the highway KM458.4 near Sungai Buloh exit near here today.

The R&S areas are located at about every 60 kilometres of the highway. They provide food stalls, showers, public telephones, service station, shelters, parking area and children's playground. Some R&S provide restaurants and motels.

The RM26 million overhead bridge restaurant project, which was launched today by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, is another tourism-touched commercial spot comprising restaurants, stalls and other public facilities, introduced by Plus to its highway users.

Asked on the investment to be spent by Plus this year to upgrade the facilities along the highway, Ikmal Hijaz said he could not reveal the amount now but "I can say that it is adequate."

He said besides the facilities, the company also needs to spend on maintaining the highway's engineering infrastructure as well as take care of the nearby compounds.

On the overhead bridge restaurant, Ikmal Hijaz said in terms of cost, it was more expensive compared with other R&S areas due to the construction of the overhead bridge.

However, he said the overhead bridge concept has attracted a lot of people who wanted to make use of the various facilities.

He said Plus is embarking on its second overhead bridge restaurant at km210 Ayer Keroh, Melaka near the Ayer Keroh exit at a slightly higher cost but with more facilities. It is due to be fully operational by June this year.

"Straddling both sides of the expressway, the overhead bridge restaurant aims to provide customers with a unique dining experience as it affords good view of the expressway," he said.

At the Sungai Buloh's overhead bridge restaurant, there are four restaurant operators namely Burger King, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Tasty Noodles and Malay House 24-hour operations.

The overhead bridge restaurant, which was opened to the public in November last year, also offered 16 units of stalls selling a variety of goods, 397 units of parking spaces, and other public facilities like shelter, surau, toilet, Petrol station, showers and auto-teller-machines.

-- BERNAMA

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