

04/07/1999

Explain benefits of tolled roads, BN reps urged

SUNGAI SIPUT, Sat. - Works Minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu said Barisan Nasional elected representatives should explain to the people the long-term benefits of road privatisation projects.

He said the people would never understand the rationale behind these projects if MPs and State Assemblymen "played politics" for self-interests.

"The country will never be developed if BN politicians do not take the trouble to explain to their constituents the long-term benefits of privatised road projects," he said.

Samy Vellu, who is Sungai Siput MP, said this when asked to comment on three BN MPs who handed over a petition signed by 23,000 people asking Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to scrap toll collection at the Damansara Link of the Western Kuala Lumpur Traffic Dispersal Scheme.

Donald Lim of Petaling Jaya Selatan, Vincent Lim of Petaling Jaya Utara and Segambut's Dr Tan Kee Kwong handed over the petition to Dr Mahathir's deputy principal private secretary Datuk Badariah Arshad.

The signatures were collected by an action committee formed by 12 associations representing over 40,000 affected families in Petaling Jaya, Bukit Lanjan, Taman Tun Dr Ismail and other surrounding areas.

Samy Vellu said the matter had been discussed in the Cabinet several times before a decision was made.

"If motorists are not interested in paying toll, they can use alternative routes ... they have a choice," he told reporters after presenting land titles to 62 villagers in Kampung Jaya Setia.

"Even the MPs are unable to see the positive aspect of the project," he said, adding that the concessionaire was spending about RM500 million to build several interchanges.

Samy Vellu said studies had shown there were fewer fatal accidents when motorists used highways.

The RM1.3 billion tolled-highway, when completed next year, will serve about 400,000 residents in the western suburbs of Kuala Lumpur.

The Damansara Link is one of the three toll plazas planned by Sistem Penyuraian Trafik KL Barat Sdn Bhd (Sprint), the highway concessionaire.

The Sprint network is a six-lane dual carriageway that includes a 700m tunnel, 17km of viaduct-bridges and 13 multi-level interchanges. The components are the Duta-Kerinci Link, the Penchala Link and the Damansara-Semantan Link.

(END)