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Toll-Rate

MTUC URGES GOVERNMENT TO STANDARDISE TOLL RATES

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 28 (Bernama) -- The Malaysian Trades Union Congress (MTUC) today urged the government to standardise toll charges on national and suburban highways and come up with a common formula for calculating the rates.

Its president Zainal Rampak said this would remove existing disparities in toll rates per km between different highway stretches.

He said it should also include the Jalan Cheras and Jalan Pahang stretches in the federal capital.

"This anomaly should be urgently looked into in order to ensure that toll concessionaires do not take undue advantage of the situation," he said in a statement.

Zainal said MTUC welcomed the government's decision to reduce toll charges for the Damansara-Puchong Highway (LDP) but hoped it would freeze all toll increases on existing highways in the country until the economy fully recovered.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad announced yesterday that the toll rate for cars at the four toll plazas on the LDP would be reduced to RM1 from RM1.50.

Gerakan central committee member, Dr S. Vijayarajam said the party welcomed the toll reduction and recognised the high cost involved in the construction and maintenance of such highways.

However, he said toll can be imposed but the figure must be a modest one, adding that the government should request the concessionaire to make it as minimal as possible.

Besides that, he said alternative roads should be provided so that users have a choice.

"Perhaps, in this way, motorists can be convinced of the convenience of paying for good thoroughfares," he said.

DAP national vice-chairman, Dr Tan Seng Giaw said the reduction in the LDP toll rate should be effective immediately and should not wait until the Chinese New Year.

He said the toll rate must be consistent with the economic situation and whatever increase should not burden the people excessively.

Former Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said the government's move to reduce the LDP toll rate reflected the positive effect of mounting protests by the people.

"No one disputes the levying of toll. What is questioned is the government's decision to give in easily to the demands of the companies (toll operators) without taking into account the effect on the people," he said in a statement read out by his wife Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Ismail outside the High Court.

Anwar said the government should not be hasty in raising toll rates especially during the current lean times.

"It is not only the big companies that face problems, but also the people. If we accommodate the requests of the companies, tens of other highway toll rates, especially in the Federal Territory and Selangor, will also increase," he added.

-- BERNAMA
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