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New toll rates effective March 1

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KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - New toll rates, including those announced by the Government last month, will take effect from March 1 on five highways.

The rate for cars will increase by 0.74 sen per kilometre along the North-South Expressway. Rates for other vehicles will be announced after the Chinese New Year along with the new toll rates for three other highways.

The three are the North-South Central Link operated by Expressway Lingkar Tengah Sdn Bhd (Elite), the Shah Alam Expressway (Kesas Sdn Bhd) and the Kulim-Butterworth Expressway (Konsortium Lebuhraya Kulim-Butterworth Sdn Bhd).

The previously announced reduced rate for the newly-opened Damansara-Puchong Highway (LDP) from RM1.50 to RM1 will also take effect from March 1.

This was announced by Works Minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu today.

The North-South Expressway and the LDP are operated by Projek Lebuhraya Utara Selatan Bhd and Lingkar Trans Kota Sdn Bhd (Litrak) respectively.

"We will go ahead with imposing the new toll rates on March 1," Samy Vellu told reporters after viewing alternative routes for residents in the vicinity of the LDP.

The minister was earlier briefed on the alternative routes by officials of Litrak. Also present was Malaysian Highway Authority director-general Datuk Chua Soon Poh.

Samy Vellu said with the exception of the LDP, the other highways would see a toll increase by "a small fraction".

"If it was a full increase, it would be very much higher. It is only a nominal increase," he said.

On Jan 27, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had said private car owners would have to pay an additional 0.74 sen per kilometre when using the 848km North-South Expressway, while toll for the LDP would be reduced to RM1 from the present RM1.50.

He had said the Government had no choice but to raise toll rates on four main expressways so that its funds could be used for other projects, including rural development.

He had said the Government would have to pay Litrak RM85 million a year as compensation for reducing the toll from RM1.50, as had been agreed, to RM1.

The toll increases come after the Cabinet decided in December 1997 not to allow PLUS, Elite, Kesas and Konsortium Lebuhraya Kulim-Butterworth to raise their toll rates in 1998 owing to the economic situation.

Samy Vellu also said those who did not wish to use the North-South Expressway could use alternative roads of the highway which he said had the "best alternate roads" in the country.

He also said he had directed the MHA to hold a ballot among residents of Bandar Sri Damansara to decide if they wanted a slip road to avoid going through the nearby Sungai Pencala toll plaza.

Samy Vellu, who on Jan 20 stopped the completion of a slip road after objections by some residents, said he had received several letters from residents who wanted the slip road to be built.

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