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Sabah-Road

NEW KK-KENINGAU ROAD TO BOOST DEVELOPMENT IN SABAH INTERIOR

KOTA BELUD, Feb 23 (Bernama) -- In a quick response to the prime minister's call for rapid development in Keningau, Works Minister Datuk Seri S.Samy Vellu today proposed a new road linking the interior district to Kota Kinabalu.

The 260 km road via Sapulut, if approved, would be constructed under the 8th Malaysia Plan (2001-2006), he said.

"We are confident that that when it's implemented more areas in Keningau will be developed through economic projects that benefits the people there," he told reporters in Tuaran near here.

Samy Vellu said the Sabah Public Works Department had identified the areas the road would pass through, and would be conducting several studies including on the costs involved.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, during his visit to Keningau last week, promised the people there he would give attention to the district's development.

Samy Vellu said the federal government had agreed to build or upgrade 12 roads in Sabah before the end of next year at a total cost of RM510 million.

He said he would table a working paper to the Cabinet seeking an additional allocation of RM344 million for road works in Sabah, which had been allocated RM1.2 billion for the purpose under the 7th Malaysia Plan (1996-2000),

Earlier, Samy Vellu visited the the 53 km Berungis-Kota Belud road, built at a cost of RM170.7 million and completed last October.

He also inspected the RM314.6 million Kota Kinabalu-Sulaman coastal road project, scheduled for completion in October next year. The project includes the RM22.5 million Mengkabong Bridge across Sungai Lipas which at 545 metres will be the longest in the state.

Samy Vellu said the two projects, financed by the federal government, benefitted the people as they cut traveling time by half.

"Sabahans also benefit because they don't need to pay toll compared to those in other states who have to pay toll to use new roads," he added.

Samy Vellu, who is also the MIC president, said although the party had only 3,400 members in the state they could help the Barisan Nasional win in some of the constituencies during the March 12-13 state election.

"The MIC will activate the party machinery and set up committees for its members to help those from other BN component parties win in this election," he said.

Samy Vellu said Indian voters could tip the balance in seats such as Tanjung Aru where the party has 600 members, Sandakan (350 members) and Tawau (300 members).

He added that Sabah MIC would hold a convention in Kota Kinabalu on March 7.

-- BERNAMA

RAR SK