

31 JAN 1999

Toll

OPPOSITION WANTS GOVT TO SCRAP TOLL CHARGES

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 31 (Bernama) -- Members of opposition parties staged demonstrations at several toll plazas in the country today in protest of the recent government approval for toll rate hikes.

At the Sungai Penchala Toll Plaza of the Damansara-Puchong Highway here, the two-hour protest involved some 500 supporters of Parti Rakyat Malaysia (PRM), PAS and DAP.

They called on the government to do away with the toll charges, saying that the construction of highways was its responsibility.

PRM president Dr Syed Husin Ali, who was present at the demonstration, said: "Construction of highways is the government's responsibility and the burden should not be imposed on motorists since they have already paid the road tax".

DAP secretary-general Lim Kit Siang was also present.

The demonstrators held banners and distributed leaflets to motorists passing by.

Segambut PAS chief Roslan Zainal said the toll rates should be abolished in the interest of the people.

In ALOR SETAR, the Kedah DAP called on the government to cancel its approval for toll rate increase.

State DAP chairman George John said the people were fed up with such increase especially during the economic slowdown.

He said this after leading 230 DAP and PAS members in a protest at the Alor Setar Utara and Selatan toll plazas.

Recently, the concessionaire for the North-South Highway, Projek Lebuhraya Utara Selatan (Plus) proposed a toll rate hike to 11.9 sen per km from the present rate of 10.5 sen per km.

The move drew strong protests from the public as well as non-governmental organisations and opposition parties.

Last Wednesday, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad announced an smaller increase of 0.75 sen per km effective after the Chinese New Year.

In SEREMBAN, some 80 DAP and PAS supporters staged similar protests at the Seremban and Senawang toll plazas.

They carried placards but later dispersed without any untoward incidents.

Menteri Besar Tan Sri Mohd Isa Abdul Samad told reporters in Batu Kikir, Kuala Pilah, that the opposition parties were trying to obtain political mileage from the toll issue.

He said they should realise that the toll charges were imposed to meet the highway construction and maintenance costs.

-- BERNAMA

TM ZUL JK