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Samy-Expressways

20 EXPRESSWAY PROJECTS TO BE DEFERRED, SAYS SAMY VELLU

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 28 (Bernama) -- Works Minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu said today 20 expressway projects will be affected by the government's decision to defer construction of new expressways by the private sector.

He said these projects for which agreements had not been signed would not be implemented.

Projects which have already started including the Ampang elevated highway and the Sprint highway or the Kerinchi Link would however go ahead, he told reporters after briefing DAP secretary-general Lim Kit Siang on the new toll for motorists at the Damansara-Puchong highway (LDP) at his ministry.

Samy Vellu said construction of the East Coast Highway would also be continued as the concession agreement had been signed between the government and the concessionaire.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad announced yesterday that the government had decided to defer construction of new expressways by the private sector as Malaysians were not yet ready to pay toll to use quality roads.

On his briefing to Lim and his delegation, Samy Vellu said he agreed to forward the DAP's proposal to set up a Highway Consultative Council to the Cabinet.

Lim, who was present at the news conference, said the proposed council would provide an avenue for motorists to discuss and forward their ideas and problems on any toll hikes and privatisation of expressways in the future.

Samy Vellu said he explained to Lim that the government did not provide any loans to Lingkarans Trans Kota Sdn Bhd (Litrak), the concessionaire of Damansara-Puchong Highway (LDP) except the RM98 million soft loan to acquire land for the project.

"I told him this project is difficult to be built as it is in a urban area," he said.

Samy Vellu also said he told Lim that certain contents of the concession agreements between the government and concessionaires have been revealed to the public (through the media).

He said it is impossible for the contents of an agreement to be revealed to the public before a project takes off the ground as landowners would increase their price sometimes five fold.

Meanwhile, Lim said motorists would still not be satisfied with the new LDP toll. He said they wanted the toll to be brought down to 50 sen.

Dr Mahathir announced yesterday that the toll for LDP would be reduced from RM1.50 to RM1 after the Chinese New Year.

Asked if the so-called Coalition Against Toll would cancel its proposed protest against toll hikes at several toll plazas on Sunday following the reduction of the LDP toll and the explanation by Samy Vellu, Lim said: "We will consider whether to hold weekly toll protests."

The coalition made up of opposition parties and non-governmental organisations proposed to hold protests every Sunday at various toll plazas over the toll hike.

-- BERNAMA

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