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Rates will be reviewed if instructed by Cabinet

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - The Works Ministry will review toll rates, including along the Damansara-Puchong Expressway (LDP), if instructed to do so by the Cabinet, its Minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu said today.

He said the Ministry had received numerous objections from the public and concerned organisations who felt toll rates, especially along the LDP, were high.

Assuring those concerned that their appeals and objections would be brought to the attention of the Cabinet, he said: "If Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad agrees with the rakyat and orders a review, then it would be done."

A one-way toll of RM1.50 for cars will be collected from tomorrow at each of the four toll plazas along the LDP expressway.

Samy Vellu, who said he would be officiating at the opening of expressway tomorrow, said he was aware there were quarters manipulating the toll issue for political gains.

The Minister was speaking to the media after opening a health awareness campaign in Pantai Dalam, Bangsar, organised by the Lembah Pantai MIC and Chaudhury Medical Centre.

Explaining the recent announcement on proposed toll increases for four other expressways, Samy Vellu said they were decisions made by the Government and not solely by his Ministry. "I do not understand why there are those who fail to realise this..."

Meanwhile, Parti Rakyat Malaysia and the Malaysian Youth Council joined the chorus of protests against the proposed hike in toll rates announced by Samy Vellu recently.

PRM secretary-general Dr Sanusi Osman said the public was opposed to the hikes because it was "unreasonable, irresponsible and inhumane" and would burden the people.

"The proposed toll hikes will increase the price of essential items and also taxi and bus fares. This will have negative implications on the lower income group."

MYC urban development committee chairman Norizan Sharif called for the matter to be discussed during the weekly Cabinet meeting on Wednesday.

The council also urged the entire concept of toll highway construction, especially in the Klang Valley, to be reviewed.

This morning, about 400 people demonstrated against the RM1.50 toll for the LDP at the Puchong Barat toll plaza led by Bukit Gasing State Assemblyman Teng Chang Khim of the DAP.

Another group of about 50 Puchong Jaya residents gathered at the Bandar Sunway toll plaza.

Tan Chong Ong, who led the Puchong Jaya residents, said 2,000 pamphlets informing of the gathering had been distributed and although only a small number showed up, many motorists showed support by sounding their horns.

The Peoples Progressive Party also organised a one-day signature campaign against the toll. The party's Federal Territory Wanita chief Mumtaz Begum said they had gathered 1,200 signatures by 5pm.

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