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Samy-Bridge

BUMIS TO GET IMPORTANT WORKS FOR SECOND BRIDGE, SAYS SAMY VELLU

PENANG, June 13 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has instructed that part of important works for the construction of the second Penang Bridge be handed to Bumiputera contractors.

Works Minister Datuk Seri S.Samy Vellu said the Prime Minister's instructions would allow more Bumiputera contractors to be involved in the construction of the 23km bridge.

The second bridge that links the island with the mainland will cost RM2 billion to build and is believed to be the longest bridge in the world with construction work to begin next year.

Speaking to the media after opening the Penang Bumiputera Contractors Association annual general meeting (AGM) here, he said the instruction would enable more Bumiputera contractors to be involved in major projects.

Samy Vellu said the government had appointed two consultant engineering firms, one from Japan and the other local, to commence with bridge conceptual work scheduled for completion in six months.

The project links the mainland with Batu Maung-Batu Kawan.

Earlier during his speech the minister said the ministry was planning to upgrade the tender offer qualification for F Class contractors from the current RM100,000 to RM500,000.

He said the government was monitoring several active contractors to assist in upgrading them to qualify for projects costing more than RM100,000.

"There are not more than 5,000 companies out of 11,000 registered Class F contractors who are genuinely active with projects. This group will be assisted to procure projects costing more than RM100,000," he said.

On the balloting for projects, Samy Vellu said he would instruct that balloting be carried out monthly instead of quarterly which was currently practised.

Commenting on shortage of skilled and experienced labour in the industrial sector, he said a special committee chaired by Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi will be looking into the matter.

The committee, he said, would look into manpower problems faced by contractors when foreign workers return to their home countries upon expiry of their permits.

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