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Tajol-Highway

RECONSIDER IPOH-LUMUT HIGHWAY PROJECT, SAYS TAJOL ROSLI

BOTA, March 29 (Bernama) -- Perak hopes the Federal government will carry-on with the Ipoh-Lumut highway construction despite the ongoing Ipoh-Lumut road widening works - from two to four lanes.

This Ipoh-Lumut road upgrade, from Sitiawan to Jelapang in Ipoh, was useful for visitors travelling to Lumut from the north but those traveling from the south had still to use a longer route.

However, Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Tajol Rosli Ghazali said the highway may not be necessary if the Federal government upgraded the Simpang Pulai to Batu Gajah road. When connected to the Ipoh-Lumut road, this stretch would make up for the lack of the highway.

Tajol Rosli spoke to reporters after the Ipoh-Lumut roadwork ground-breaking ceremony, along with Works Minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu, at the Titi Gantung fruit-stall complex here today.

Samy Vellu said the proposal not proceed with the Ipoh-Lumut highway project came from Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad who preferred for the road to be only upgraded so that users need not pay toll.

"The Prime Minister wants the road to be toll free so as not burden the rakyat living nearby - mostly low-income earners," he said.

The government was considering to upgrade the Simpang Pulai-Batu Gajah road instead of constructing a highway due to the latter's prohibitive cost of RM2 billion.

"However, if the Jalan Ipoh-Lumut upgrading brought rapid development in Seri Iskandar and its vicinity, we may think about constructing the highway. We'll look at the existing development," he said.

Tajol Rosli also said land acquisition in the areas involving the Ipoh-Lumut road upgrading was almost complete. He hoped the Works Department would give adequate compensation for the land acquired.

The government had given the Ipoh-Lumut highway project to Malaysia Resources Corporation Berhad but withdrew it later as MRCB found it unprofitable.

However, Tajol Rosli hoped the government would provide grants to reduce costs for the contractor and perhaps hand the project back to MRCB if it was keen.

-- BERNAMA

KAY LYY PC