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Countdown traffic lights to be installed nationwide in stages

SUNGAI SIPUT, Sat. - The Public Works Department, following Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's directive, will install the countdown traffic lights system at all road junctions in the country in stages.

Works Minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu said the system would eventually replace the existing traffic lights for more co-ordinated and efficient traffic control.

The system was first installed in Malacca and is operational at several road junctions in Ipoh. It is expected to be activated on roads here soon.

Dr Mahathir had recently directed that the new countdown system be installed at all roads in the country.

Samy Vellu, who is Sungai Siput MP, was speaking after attending a briefing by PWD officers on the up-grading of a 12km road from Kanthan to the Sungai Siput Hospital costing RM25 million yesterday.

Also present was Perak PWD director Datuk I. Dorairajoo.

The project involved the construction of four lanes, two bridges in Jalan Kanthan and Salak Utara, street lights, and a tunnel at Rimba Panjang. There are also two lanes for pedestrians and motorcycles in Kanthan.

Samy Vellu said the countdown system would enable motorists to be more comfortable in their vehicles while waiting for the lights to turn green.

The system times the seconds before the red or green lights are lighted up to alert motorists when to stop or move ahead.

Samy Vellu said Sungai Siput would be the first small town to have the system.

On the recent ruling by the Treasury to cancel projects costing more than RM10 million if work had not started after six months, he said:

"There are cases where the Treasury would take time to approve the projects submitted by the ministry and PWD even after three or four months. The Treasury should respond within three weeks after the projects have been submitted."

Samy Vellu was commenting on the statement by Treasury secretary-general Tan Sri Samsudin Hitam on Thursday that projects costing more than RM10 million would automatically be cancelled if the project had not started within six months after the letters of intent were issued.