

'Maju Expressway classic highway robbery by BN'
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The controversial Maju Expressway (MEX) concessions award is a “clear-cut” example of how the BN allows its cronies to milk taxpayers’ funds, said PJ Utara MP Tony Pua.

NONE “The MEX is the most clear-cut case of making tax-payers’ pay for the construction of the highway, and subsequently allowing a BN crony to milk the tax-payers further by charging toll, in this case, over a period of 33 years.

“There is no better example of how the BN government and its cronies are conducting highway robbery in broad daylight,” he said in a statement today.

Pua (left) was responding to yesterday’s report where PKR strategy director Rafizi Ramli demanded the return of a government grant of RM976.7 million given to Maju Holdings during the construction of MEX, following the sale of the concession to EP Manufacturing Berhad (EPMB) for RM1.7 billion.

Rafizi, estimating that Maju had only spent RM60 million for the entire project, charged the company for making a “windfall” on the sale at the expense of the rakyat, who had borne a large chunk of the highway’s cost.

toll booths smarttag and touch n go booths Pua pointed out, “Effectively, 74 percent of the cost of constructing the highway had been borne by the taxpayers.”

“The question that needs to be asked is if the government can already fund three quarters of the highway construction project, why was there even a need to ‘privatise’ it to the private sector?

“Why couldn’t the government raise a further small sum of RM343 million to complete the highway without privatisation? Needless to say, the award of the contract was done via direct negotiations without any open tender,” he asked.

‘Najib must walk the talk’

The MP said the sale of the concession to MESB has enriched Maju Holdings Sdn Bhd, wholly owned by Abu Sahid Mohamed whom he called a “BN crony”, a net profit of RM1.09 billion or an “astronomical 1,800 percent return on investment in less than eight years”.

“The rape of Malaysian taxpayers which made a billionaire out of Abu Sahid Mohamed on this exercise alone is simply outrageous and unacceptable,” he said.

NONE Pua, who is also DAP national publicity secretary, called on Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak (left) to heed Rafizi’s call for the government to reclaim the grant following the sale.

“The grant was clearly unnecessary as there were known to be at least six bidders seeking to acquire MEX, proving that MEX is assured of profitability,” he said.

He reminded Najib of the latter’s claim that “rent-seeking and patronage” would not be tolerated under PM’s ‘transformational government’.

The DAP MP added that Maju’s 2007 concession agreement had been amended several times through

supplemental agreements in 1998, 2003 and 2006.

“The contents in the agreement are still a mystery as of today as the MEX agreements was mysteriously not included when other highways agreements were declassified by the cabinet in November 2008,” he said.

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