

DAP: Is JB Causeway toll hike legal?
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Johor state opposition leader Dr Boo Cheng Hau has questioned the "legality" of the toll hike at the Customs, Immigration and Quarantine (CIQ) complex leading to Singapore, asking if it had been approved by cabinet and was gazetted first, according to law.

"The federal government should explain whether the toll hikes had been approved by the cabinet and gazetted prior to its legal implementation on Aug 1 according to the requirement of law under Section 7(1) of the Federal Roads (Private Management) Act 1984," Boo, a DAP assemblyperson, said in a statement yesterday.

Boo (right) demanded an "assurance" from the government that the toll hike was legally carried out.

The CIQ toll hike came into effect on Aug 1, after a notice period of less than a week.

It caused factory bus drivers to protest by refusing to pay the toll on the morning of Aug 1, clogging up traffic at the CIQ complex and causing a jam that spread across to the Singapore immigration checkpoint.

Meanwhile, Boo also rebutted BN's Johor Baru MP Shahrir Samad's suggestion after the fiasco, that a toll waiver for buses and taxis could reduce congestion at the CIQ complex.

"Traffic jams cannot be reduced with the toll hikes until the most efficient public transportation is in place, especially the MRT and LRT systems linking Johor Baru Central and Second Link with Woodlands and (Tuas checkpoint) respectively," he said.

'Disclose concessions deals'

Instead, Boo asked Shahrir, as a former Public Accounts Committee (PAC) chairperson, to work with current PAC chair Nur Jazlan Mohamed to urge the government to make public the concessions with Plus Malaysia Bhd (Plus) and Malaysian Resources Corporation Bhd (MRCB).

Nur Jazlan is the MP for Pulai, a Johor constituency.

"Plus should not be collecting toll fees at the new CIQ complex while the JB Inner Link and Eastern Dispersal Link (EDL) are built and maintained by the Works Department and MRCB respectively," he added.

However the concessions deals, like all other similar deals, are cloaked from public

scrutiny, under the Official Secrets Act.

The EDL is an 8.6km stretch that connects the North-South Expressway, of which Plus is the concessionaire, to the CIQ complex in Johor Baru.

By placing the toll collection centre at the CIQ instead of at the entry to the EDL, those who pass the CIQ without using the highway en route to Singapore will still have to pay toll.

Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin, also a Johor Umno leader, has given his assurance that the government will look into the matter so as to not burden local road users.

This has come despite the problem having existed since 2012, with Prime Minister Najib Razak promising to scrap the toll hike just before the 13th general election.

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