

Smart tunnel fiasco: Samy told to quit
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A police report was lodged by PKR Youth today calling on the men in blue to investigate Works Minister S Samy Vellu on suspicion of alleged corruption and abuse of power.

About 20 PKR Youth members gathered in front of the Dang Wangi police station in Kuala Lumpur demanding Samy Vellu to resign over the failure of the Stormwater Management and Road Tunnel (Smart) to work when flash floods brought the capital to a standstill on Sunday.

Deputy PKR Youth chief Fariz Musa said the police must investigate whether Samy Vellu has any interest with Gamuda - one of the tunnel stakeholders.

"Gamuda has been given toll rights for 35 years. Since the company has invested only RM600 million into the project, the remaining RM1.2 billion was borne by the government," he said.

Built at a cost of RM1.9 billion, the Smart tunnel serves as a stormwater duct and road highway. It was officially opened for use on May 14.

Concession agreement

Fariz also criticised the police for failing to take action when they revealed a secret toll concession agreement on Feb 28 which stated toll charges will be increased every five years.

According to the 40-year concession agreement between Stormwater Management and Road Tunnel Sdn Bhd and the government, the company expects to generate revenue of RM36.4 million from toll collection in the first year, rising to RM79 million in the fifth year.

The figures are based on the concessionaire's "modest" projection of around 24 million vehicles annually for the first five years.

This, in turn, is based on the traffic volume of the less-used dedicated highway linking the Kuala Lumpur International Airport to the Shah Alam Expressway (Kesas).

However, PKR Youth pointed out that the traffic volume projection remains the same between 2022 and 2042 at 40.2 million vehicles annually.

According to the document, the concessionaire would have obtained RM7.2 billion in cumulative revenue from toll collection by 2042, for a project that cost RM1.9 billion to build.

The concession agreement correctly predicted that motorists will pay RM2 in toll charge to use the tunnel which links Sungai Besi to Kuala Lumpur when it opens.

It also said the toll rates would be RM7 by 2030.

RM50 million damages

The flash floods that took place on Sunday night caused about RM50 million worth of losses for the business community.

"Does this mean the RM1.9 billion spent on the tunnel is a waste of money in light of the government's recent announcement that an additional RM100 million has been allocated to fix the capital's drainage system?" he asked.

Fariz has also criticised Samy for charging users toll when the tunnel isn't fully operational yet.

"There are also dangerous slopes and leakages that pose a serious safety risk for users in the tunnel," he added.

On Thursday, the Star reported that motorists were shocked to find a pool of water along a 20m stretch of the emergency lane located in the middle of the tunnel.

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