

**Government looking into easing toll burden**  
**Malaysiakini.com**  
**April 17, 2008**

The government is looking at all available options to see how it can ease the burden of the people from continuously having to live with increased toll rates every three years, said Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak today.

For starters, the government has directed the Economic Planning Unit (EPU) in the Prime Minister's Department to find a comprehensive solution for this problem.

However the premier stopped short of saying if the government would consider taking over the highway concessions from the private players.

"I've directed the EPU to suggest to the government a comprehensive solution to tackle the toll hike issue which is a burden to the people and the government," he said.

"We are looking at all options but it's premature for me to say now what the government is going to do," he added.

The prime minister said the government realised a comprehensive solution had to be found for the toll issue as "it is an issue the people dislike most".

He was speaking to reporters after opening the 63rd annual general meeting of the Associated Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Malaysia (Acccim).

Acccim was among the various bodies that had proposed for the government to take over the highway concessions.

The proponents of such a takeover argued that it was cheaper and financially viable for the government to just buy off the highways rather than paying compensations to the highway concessionaries in order to stop them from raising the toll rates.

### **Making people-friendly policies**

Najib, who is also the finance minister, also said that the government would look into reviewing current policies that were not business-friendly and did not benefit the people.

"But we need time to study the policies to ensure whatever decision we make is well received not only by the business community but also the masses," he was reported as saying by Bernama.

He also added that the government would re-examine periodically electricity tariff and price of liquefied natural gas.

However this would only be done by balancing the interests of all parties involved, be they energy users or providers.

"It has to be taken in a holistic manner, taking into consideration the position of Tenaga Nasional Bhd, the industry, our national capacity and oil and gas reserves that we have," he said.

And when asked on when the next power tariff review would come about, he said: "I don't know yet but I will study the matter first."

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