

# Toll figures 'juggled by opposition'

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WORKS Minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu said yesterday that the figures he gave on toll collections, maintenance and construction costs of highways had been juggled by the opposition to give the impression that the concessionaires were enjoying huge profits.

"I gave a proper answer, but it has been juggled... as if somebody has collected RM20 million and taken it home," he said in the lobby of Parliament House.

He said for every RM1 paid by road users as toll, 40 to 50 sen was being used to repay loans taken by the concessionaires to build the roads.

"In addition, 15 to 25 per cent of the amount is used for rehabilitation work while the remainder is spent on maintenance and meeting operational costs."

Last Tuesday, Samy Vellu, in a written reply to Teresa Kok (DAP-Seputeh) and Tan Kok Wai (DAP-Cheras), had disclosed that the 19 concessionaires had collected RM23.65 billion in toll and spent RM492 million a year on maintenance.

The companies had spent RM18.93 billion on building these facilities.

Samy Vellu said in some instances, like the North-South Expressway built and managed by Projek Lebuhraya Utara Selatan (PLUS), the RM15.91 billion collected had exceeded the RM5.940



Works Minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu

billion spent on building it. This had raised questions about the reasons for the toll increase at this highway.

Commenting on PLUS, he said the company had also spent RM1.042 billion to expand sections of the North-South Expressway from the existing two lanes to three lanes.

"At the Penang Bridge, the existing two lanes are also being expanded to three lanes. This would require PLUS to take additional loans from the banks," he said. Penang bridge is managed by PLUS.

On the Damansara-Puchong Highway (LDP), Samy Vellu said the concessionaire Litrak was asked to build six multi-level interchanges to reduce traffic congestion.

"It cost RM400 million, which was paid by Litrak."