

# Samy: Govt must honour concession agreements

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**CARACAS:** Toll increases that are stipulated in concession agreements cannot be denied even if the expressway companies meet their projected revenue, Works Minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu said.

The companies had taken huge bank loans that must be repaid within the concession period, he said, adding that an operator who took a RM1.3bil loan would have to repay a total of RM2.9bil over a 15-year period inclusive of interest.

"So whatever they have earned, they have to repay the banks, and banks do not allow any extension of the repayment period," he told the Malaysian media here yesterday.

He is in Venezuela with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and will be discussing possible construction ventures in the country.

Samy Vellu had announced the increase in toll for five expressways before leaving for the South American country.

He said it was better for toll rates to be increased rather than to lower the rates and prolong the tenure of toll collection.

"Ultimately, we want the highways to be toll-free. This is a pledge we have made to the people. We have kept our word in certain roads such as Jalan Kuching and in Cheras.