

'Reveal how toll deals were reached'

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KUALA LUMPUR: The Coalition Against Toll Hike wants the government to reveal how it reached its agreements with highway concessionaire companies, which put the public at a disadvantage.

"The government has never revealed any contracts although they involve public interest," said Tian Chua, information chief of Parti Keadilan Rakyat, a member of the coalition.

He told a press conference yesterday the public had never been informed about the cost breakdown of highways such as the Lebuh raya Damansara-Puchong (LDP).

"It is strange that the costing was determined through a process that was not transparent," he said.

He argued that under the agreement with LDP concessionaire company Lingkaran Trans Kota Sdn Bhd, the government has very limited power to tell

the company to stop charging or reduce the toll.

"The government is creating a money-making machine.

"As long as people are still using the toll, the government and the people have to pay. Why did you draft such a ridiculous contract?" he asked.

He also took to task Works Minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu.

"In the contract, the government has already decided the rate of the scheduled payment. So why does Samy always say the government has been negotiating with the concessionaires?"

He said the terms of reference in the contract only benefitted the concessionaire company.

"There is no room for adjustment ... The people and government are the losers in the contract."

Keadilan treasurer-general Tan Sri Khalid Ibrahim said the Official Secrets Act should be repealed so that details of the negotiations can be made public.

He said the government should have a right to information act, which would allow the public to ask for details of such discussions to be revealed.

"The government servants can also be whistle-blowers," he said.

Others present at the press conference were DAP NGO bureau chief Ronnie Liu, PAS treasurer-general Dr Hatta Ramli, Keadilan Federal Territory chief Dr Sanusi Osman and deputy secretary-general Dr Jeyakumar Xavier.

Effective Jan 1, tolls at five highways in Selangor have gone up by as much as 60%. These highways are LDP, Shah Alam Highway, Cheras-Kajang Highway, KL-Karak Highway and Bentong and Guthrie Corridor Highway.

When announcing the toll hike last month, Samy Vellu said since 2000, when agreements with the five concessionaires were restructured, the government had paid out RM2.589 billion in the form of cash and extension of concessions to compensate the operators.