

No transformation in RM7b highway deal, Pua tells Najib
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KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 30 — Jumping on the public uproar over the RM7 billion west coast highway deal, a DAP MP continued to pound today the Barisan Nasional (BN) government's failure to live up to its economic reform pledges.

"This deal proves that no 'transformation' has taken place, and the financial interest of political cronies outweighs the needs of the ordinary Malaysians," Tony Pua (picture) said in a statement.

"The BN federal government needs major improvements in negotiating its mega-project contracts," he added.

The DAP publicity chief questioned Putrajaya's decision to revive the old highway project but tacking on an extra 100km linking Banting in Selangor to Taiping in Perak, noting the sharp increase in cost by what he said amounted to a 134 per cent hike.

"How did the expressway suddenly increase by 100km between the townships of Taiping and Banting?" Pua asked.

He said that the company awarded the deal, Kumpulan Europlus Bhd, had said in its 2007 filing to Bursa Malaysia that the highway only measured 216km.

Pua, the Petaling Jaya Utara MP, reminded Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak that Malaysians were still seeing "unbelievably lucrative concessions being awarded to the politically-connected and cronies of BN politicians".

He pointed to the government's decision last year to add on another RM3 billion to a the existing order for six navy patrol ships as among the projects handed out to what he said were its political connections.

Pua said: "The prime minister must explain the above glaring discrepancies to demonstrate that he is truly transparent and accountable to the public."

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