

Penang Undersea Tunnel Not A Pressing Need - Tun Abdullah

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KEPALA BATAS, March 30 (Bernama) -- The Penang state government's proposal to build a 6.5 km undersea tunnel from Gurney Drive to Bagan Ajam is not suitable as the state already has two bridges connecting the island to the mainland.

Former prime minister Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said the tunnel was not a pressing necessity to resolve the traffic problem and the density of traffic in the affected part of the state.

He said the hasty action of the state government in building the tunnel showed they did not have proper planning and was only out to gain publicity.

"We already have two bridges including the second Penang Bridge which will be operational soon. So why the need to build an undersea tunnel.

"This is not a necessity and what is important is for the state government to resolve the traffic density issue on this part of the island," he told reporters after opening a Karisma Teman 1Azam programme in Kelapa Batas here Saturday.

The 6.5 km undersea tunnel from Gurney Drive to Bagan Ajam, which is a mega project costing RM6.3 billion, was announced by the DAP leadership together with the construction of three main highway projects.

Abdullah, who is the Member of Parliament for Kepala Batas, said the state government should also look at the long-term effects of the tunnel on fishermen following the unplanned development.

"The fishermen in the area will be upset and will oppose it as it will affect their livelihood," he said.

Asked on the undersea tunnel project which was said to be planned by Barisan Nasional when ruling Penang, he said BN had to change its plan after evaluating the construction of the second bridge which was felt to be more relevant in overcoming traffic congestion.

"I did not say we do not need to build the tunnel forever but it is seen as not a pressing need as we have adequate access with the completion of the second bridge which will be operational soon," he said.

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