

**No Toll Increase This Year, Says Muhyiddin**  
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PUTRAJAYA, Feb 5 (Bernama) -- Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin announced Wednesday that there would be no toll increase this year, but the government would need to pay RM400 million in compensation to the concessionaires involved.

The deputy prime minister said the compensation would be for concessionaires in the Klang Valley which were supposed to raise their toll rates.

He was speaking at a news conference on the decision after a meeting of the special committee tackling the rising cost of living, which was chaired by him, here.

Muhyiddin said there were several other concessionaires including Projek Lebuhraya Utara-Selatan (PLUS) which would not be increasing their toll rates.

"There are altogether 29 highway concessionaires, but only the ones in the Klang Valley are involved (getting compensation). If I'm not mistaken, there are nine of them," he said.

Muhyiddin said the special committee also agreed to ask the Works Ministry to do a comprehensive study on the existing toll concessions in the long-term context, to see whether there was a way to re-negotiate with the concessionaires on toll collection.

"...if there are terms that both sides can agree upon, including extending the concession period as a means to ensure that toll rates will not be raised in future, these can be discussed.

"The committee today agreed that the Works Ministry hold preliminary discussions with all the concessionaires for that purpose," he said.

Muhyiddin also disclosed that the committee agreed to allocate RM120 million for the Federal Agricultural Marketing Authority (Fama), National Fishermen's Association (Nekmat) and National Farmers Organisation (Nafas).

He said this was to ensure that these three agencies under the Agriculture and Agro-based Industry Ministry could provide enough supply of selected produce to prevent their prices from going up high in the market.

This was among the initiatives tabled by the ministry at Wednesday's meeting, besides other efforts to ensure adequate supply at reasonable prices of selected vegetables, dry foodstuff, fish and many more, he added.

Muhyiddin said Wednesday's meeting focused on six aspects or areas which could have implications on the cost of living, namely fuel, energy (electricity, etc.), food, toll, transportation (bus and taxi fares) and housing.

He said the committee also agreed to allocate RM3.5 million for consumer associations nationwide, including 20 main ones, to assist in organising consumer education programmes.

On public transport fares, Muhyiddin said the committee understood that the operators had applied for the fares be raised, but it decided that the Land Public Transport Commission (SPAD) should forward whatever decision it made with regard to fares to the committee before any action could be

taken.

"These are among the matters that I can mention here. There are other matters I cannot disclose until they are brought to the next cabinet meeting," he said.

On the coming Kajang by-election, the deputy prime minister said the Barisan National component party leaders would meet before the end of this month to discuss the matter before making a decision.

Wednesday morning, the Election Commission announced that polling for the state seat would be on March 23 and nomination of candidates on March 11.

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