

**Is Putrajaya helping MRCB over Causeway toll hike, asks DAP
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BY JENNIFER GOMEZ**

DAP wants to know if the Malaysian Highway Authority (MHA) and by extension, the Barisan Nasional government, have become spokesmen for the Malaysian Resources Corp Bhd (MRCB) over the increased toll collection at the Customs, Immigration and Quarantine (CIQ) complex to Singapore.

Kluang MP Liew Chin Tong called on Works Minister Datuk Fadillah Yusof to explain if director-general of MHA Datuk Ismail Mat Salleh was sanctioned by Putrajaya to endorse MRCB's defence of the toll collection.

He said MRCB was on a propaganda "war", pitting users of the Eastern Dispersal Link (EDL) against CIQ users, where the contention was that those using the CIQ did not love Malaysia and crossed the Causeway to work.

"Their argument is that since Malaysians are earning more working in Singapore, they should subsidise other users who choose to use the EDL.

"But why pit EDL users against CIQ users when Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak promised that there would not be toll collection on EDL and there would not be toll hike on CIQ?" Liew asked.

He added that the assumption that all those who worked in Singapore were well-to-do was wrong.

Instead, Liew said the entire logistics sector was affected by the toll hike and it was bound to have a state-wide inflationary effect, adding that those using factory buses and other modes of public transport would be adversely affected as well.

He also said, going by media reports, MRCB would be collecting RM13 million per month from the CIQ toll, which came to the same amount from the disposable income of ordinary Johoreans.

"I have been told that MRCB has a war chest of up to RM10 million to spend on all sorts of propaganda and advertisements for its 'nationalistic' argument to justify its 'right' to suck away the hard-earned money of ordinary Malaysians amounting to RM13 million per month.

"The question for Fadilah is whether MHA and even the entire government are spokesmen for MRCB's propaganda?"

The toll implemented from August 1 is to fund the RM1.3 billion EDL, which is free for all motorists in state capital Johor Baru, except for those going through the CIQ complex to Singapore.

Motorists from Singapore entering Johor through the CIQ Complex have to pay a toll of RM9.70, up from the previous RM2.90.

Those travelling from Johor to Singapore previously paid no tolls, but are now subject to a new toll of RM6.80.

While motorcycles are exempted from the tolls, buses, goods vehicles and taxis now also have to fork out extra at the Malaysian checkpoint.

Following the toll hike, Singapore reportedly said it planned to increase its toll rate to match that of the Johor Causeway in the next few weeks.

LLM's Ismail had reportedly said on Monday that the low-income group would not be burdened because the 95,000 daily users on motorcycles were not charged the toll at the CIQ, while about 180,000 vehicles using the EDL and its inner ring roads stretching 8.6km were also not charged.

He said that under the new toll rate, public transport cost for taxis only increased by RM37.40 per month for each passenger while bus fares increased by RM6 per month per passenger. – August 13, 2014.

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