

**Less BR1M if no toll hike, says Najib**  
**Malaysian Insider**  
**Oct 18, 2015**  
**By Anisah Shukry**

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak today sought to justify the recent hike in toll fares which left motorists furious, saying that it was a "trade-off" because of limited funds.

He said that if Putrajaya chose instead to compensate toll concessionaires to prevent the hike, this would only leave the government with less money for programmes, such as the 1Malaysia People's Aid (BR1M).

"You don't raise the toll, you pay compensation... less money for other things, less money for BR1M.

"So you have to decide. There is always a trade-off because of limited funds," said Najib, in his speech at the Gerakan annual national delegates' conference in Setia Alam.

He said this in response to Gerakan president Datuk Mah Siew Keong's earlier speech, where the latter had called for the government to increase BR1M allocation in Budget 2016.

Najib also said that the toll concession agreements had been signed 20 years ago, before he was made prime minister.

But he admitted he could not absolve himself of all responsibility, since he was already in the government at that time.

"Of course I can say it's not under my time, under my predecessor's time. But I'm not like that. There's the principle of common responsibility.

"I was part of the government then, but it was decided 20 years ago."

Twelve highway concessionaires in the Klang Valley announced a toll rate hike of between 10 sen and RM6 that took effect Thursday.

The affected highways in the Klang Valley are the Kuala Lumpur-Karak (KLK) Expressway, Maju Expressway (MEX), Kajang Highway-SILK, Duta-Ulu Kelang Expressway (DUKE), Stormwater Management and Road Tunnel (SMART), KL-Kuala Selangor Expressway (Latar), Sungai Besi Highway (Besraya), New Pantai Expressway (NPE), Kajang Seremban Highway (Lekas), Damansara Puchong Highway (LDP), Western Kuala Lumpur Traffic Dispersal Scheme (Sprint) and Cheras-Kajang Highway (Grand Saga).

Some expressways in Penang also raised the toll rate, while operator PLUS Malaysia Bhd said its eight highways would not see any increase. – October 18, 2015.

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