

## **Government Intervenes To Curb Higher Toll Hike At 3 Highways**

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PUTRAJAYA, Oct 20 (Bernama) -- The government had intervened by curbing the initial proposed toll hikes at three highways.

Disclosing this today, Works Minister Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof said three highways had proposed to raise their toll rates by RM2, but the government decided on a RM1 increase only.

He said the concessionaires were entitled to raise their toll rates as stipulated in their contracts but they did not increase the rates since 2008.

"We have been holding on...actually, it was supposed to be increased in 2014 but Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said no and to let us study in depth and have further negotiations with the concessionaires.

"After the negotiations, we had to finally increase the toll rates though the increase seems high," he said in response to the public outcry following the toll hike at 18 highways in the Klang Valley.

Speaking to reporters after attending the Quantity Surveying International Convention 2015 here today, Fadillah said the government was expected to pay RM1.6 billion in compensation to the concessionaires if there was no increase in the toll rates by next year.

Based on the concessionaires' agreement this year, he said the government would have to pay RM580 million in compensation.

"Although the toll increase has been implemented, we are still paying RM510 million in compensation for the January-Oct 15 period because of the delay in raising the toll rates which should have been done in January this year."

Fadillah said the high amount of compensation paid to the concessionaires should have been used for economic and development activities to benefit all levels of Malaysian society.

"We have been using the user-pay basis, whereby those who use the highways pay toll. We have to be fair to the people who don't use highways like those in Sabah, Sarawak and Kelantan. So the money should be channelled for economic activities and development," he said.

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