

## **Delays In Tunnel Project Not Due To Barisan, Says See-To**

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**By MT Webmaster**

(The Star) – There are various reasons behind the delay of the RM6.34bil Major Roads and Tunnel project in Penang and they have nothing to do with Barisan Nasional, says Datuk Eric See-To.

The Barisan Nasional strategic communications deputy director cited one of them as an insufficient number of consultants in the first company appointed to do the feasibility study and other reports.

He said others include the removal of Beijing Urban Construction Group (BUCG) and the need to identify landowners for acquisition purposes in one of the earmarked roads for construction.

“According to the original project schedule, construction of the first road was supposed to start in 2015 and ready by this year, while all other relevant reports are to be completed by April 2016.

“But until now, there is no construction of the roads and the RM305mil reports are yet to be completed. This despite the signing of the agreement five years ago,” he said in a statement in response to allegations that Barisan was to blame for “sabotaging” and delaying the project.

He said the project’s Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) had appointed a listed company – Astral Supreme – in August 2013 to enter into a joint venture (JV) to do a RM275mil out of the RM305mil reports.

“The JV was terminated one year later as Astral said it could not find enough consultants to do the reports,” said See-To.

Then in July 2016, Penang exco member Lim Hock Seng said the construction of one of the roads from Air Itam to Tun Dr Lim Chong Eu Expressway was delayed as more studies were needed.

See-To said the state government also announced on September 2016 that it wanted to remove BUCG from the project.

Lim also said that the landowners along the Teluk Bahang-Tanjung Bungah road project needed to be identified first before the construction could proceed.

“In October, it was reported that the SPV company said there was no more urgency to complete the reports.

“Then on the following month, one of the contractors, Bursa Malaysia-listed Mudajaya Group Bhd, reportedly pulled out of the project, citing the inability to secure the exact date for the site possession, the uncertainty in signing the construction contract and insufficient information given,” he said.

In George Town, Lim maintained that the Federal Government had caused a delay to the construction of the three paired roads.

“How can there be no delay when instead of the original environmental impact assessment (EIA) on the three roads, an EIA (Schedule II) report was required?” he said.

Lim was referring to what is commonly known as a detailed environmental impact assessment (DEIA) imposed by the Department of Environment, which involves “a larger scope of study that includes all stakeholders such as the public”.

“Due to the DEIA imposition, the final reports could only be submitted last April,” he said.

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Sources: <https://www.malaysia-today.net/2018/02/04/delays-in-tunnel-project-not-due-to-barisan-says-see-to/>