

Second bridge ready by 2011

Work on Penang's new link to start in 2008

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PENANG: Construction of the planned 22.5km second Penang bridge linking Batu Maung on the island and Batu Kawan on the mainland is expected to begin in early 2008.

Works Ministry road planning director Md Amir Kassim said it was due to be opened to traffic by early 2011.

"The bridge will span 15km across the Southern Channel, with a 1.5km 'directional ramp' at the Bayan Lepas coastal highway and 6km of 'approach road' at Batu Kawan.

"Each side of the bridge carriageway, where a speed limit of 80km/hr will be imposed, will be 14.4m wide," he told Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi during a site inspection at Batu Maung here yesterday.

He added that a total of RM419.5mil will be used to upgrade roads in the vicinity of the second bridge on the island.

Earlier, the Prime Minister opened a new RM29.8mil bridge across Sungai Muda, which connects Penaga in Seberang Perai

and Kota Kuala Muda in Kedah.

In his speech, Abdullah reminded contractors that delays in projects or problems that caused these projects to be abandoned would anger the people.

Commending the Public Works Department and contractor Lejadi Infra Sdn Bhd for completing the Sungai Muda Bridge ahead of schedule, Abdullah said: --

"This is what I want from contractors. They must be fast. After finishing a contract, they can start working on another contract."

Speaking at another function, the prime minister said contractors proposing infrastructure projects should think and plan creatively to reduce the cost to the Government.

He singled out the toll-free RM200mil Jelutong Expressway (JE) on the island as an example for other contractors to follow.

"I must thank IJM CEO (Datuk) Krishnan Tan for building a good road that did not incur

cost to the Government nor any toll payment, but which has benefited the people," he said when opening the expressway.

Abdullah said once the second Penang bridge was built, the expressway would become a major passage for the movement of goods to Penang ports and the international airport, thus bringing prosperity to Penang and the Northern Corridor.

Addressing an Umno gathering, Abdullah said after George Town, Jelutong, Tanjung Bungah and Batu Ferringhi, the wave of growth on the island would hit Balik Pulau.

"I want Balik Pulau to be the next area of growth in the northern region, with its proximity to Tanjung Beraga," the prime minister said when opening the new Umno Tanjong premises in Lebuah Bishop here.

He advised Malay-based organisations and agencies to shed outdated approaches and change their ways to suit current needs and demands.