

Newspaper : **The Star**
 Date : **21st June 2011**
 Title : **60,000 daily traffic volume seen for new highway**
 Section : **Starbiz** Page : **7**



New highway: Amran showing the toll gate to the new highway.

60,000 daily traffic volume seen for new highway

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SELANGOR: LATAR Expressway (KL-Kuala Selangor Expressway), to be open to the public before the month ends, will see an initial average daily traffic volume of over 60,000 vehicles.

The concessionaire of the highway, KL-Kuala Selangor Expressway Bhd, is jointly owned by Bina Puri Holdings Bhd and Arena Irama Sdn Bhd.

"For the first 10 years, our projected traffic growth is an average of 5%. The ramp-up period for this expressway will be between seven and nine years," KL-Kuala Selangor Expressway Bhd chief executive officer Amran Amir said yesterday during a media tour.

The breakeven duration for LATAR Expressway will be between 15 and 20 years.

When asked why the gestation period for the highway was longer than the average gestation of between eight and 10 years for other highways, Amran attributed it to the route alignment of the expressway.

"This is like a Catch 22 - whether to build a highway to cater for existing development in an area or to build the highway first to spur development. In this case, it's the latter," he said.

The highway is expected to boost development along the corridor and create new townships.

"This should bring in new traffic thereafter. Other factors that would bring in new traffic for this highway include the development of

the West Coast Highway and the proposed KL Outer Ring Road (KLORR)," said Amran.

LATAR Expressway is a dual carriageway measuring 33km linking KL from Templer's Park in Gombak to Ijok in Kuala Selangor.

"Roughly half of the highway is in the Gombak district while the remaining half is in the Kuala Selangor district. It takes 18 minutes to reach from one end of the highway to the other end," said Amran.

The expressway comprises four interchanges, at Ijok, Puncak Alam, Kuang and Templer's Park, and toll rates of the highway will be announced by the Works Minister within this week.

The highway serves several townships such as Kuala Selangor, Assam Jawa, Ijok, Bestari Jaya (Batang Berjuntai), Kota Puteri, Puncak Alam, Shah Alam, Bukit Jelutong, Sungai Buloh, Kundang, Rawang and Selayang.

LATAR Expressway is a privatisation project by the Government under the build-operate-transfer system. The concession agreement was awarded in November 1997 but the project did not take off owing to the Asian financial crisis.

A supplementary agreement was then signed in February 2008 for a concession period of 40 years (inclusive of a three-year construction period) with works on the highway having begun October 2008.

The expressway was built at a cost of RM958mil with the company having secured a RM1.04bil loan from Bank Pembangunan Malaysia and the Islamic Development Bank.

From : Group Corporate Communication Department
 Date : 22nd June 2011
 Subject : Bina Puri News Update

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