

Another study on Labuan bridge

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KOTA KINABALU: A decision on the Labuan-Menumbok bridge will be made next year, after a comprehensive study, although one was already done by Universiti Malaya Sabah (UMS) costing RM5 million earlier.

Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Mohd Yassin said the study – this time by a consultant appointed by the Federal Territories and Urban Wellbeing Ministry, would only be ready next year. The cost of the new study was not revealed.

“Once completed, the findings will be brought back to the Prime Minister...so let’s pray for a positive outcome,” he said during a dialogue held in conjunction with his meet with

Federal and State public service officials and staff at the Magellan Sutera, Tuesday.

Other matters raised related to calls for uniform Federal allowance for all Federal civil servants in Sabah, allocation for better road systems and better Internet broadband services in the State as well as a review to standardise the renewal period for work permits for West Malaysian civil servants working in Sabah.

According to Muhyiddin, the comprehensive study, among others, is looking at the proposed site for its construction to see whether it is suitable or other potential sites that would be more economical.

It would also look at the socio-economic

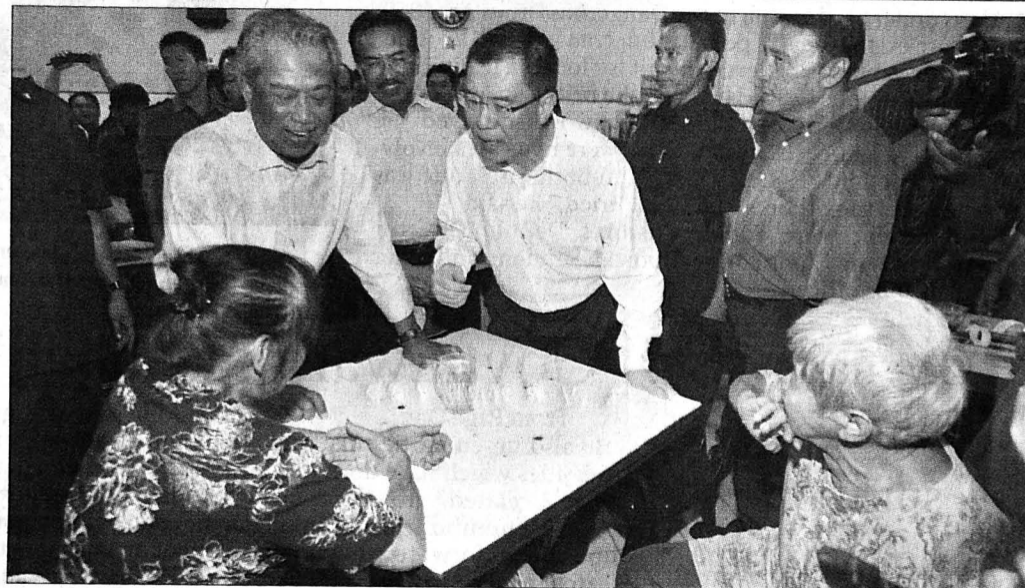
impact if the bridge is built, including whether it will truly benefit Labuan or otherwise and what would be the impact on Labuan folk.

Also whether having the bridge would result in Sabah and Labuan continuing to progress or because of this Labuan people will migrate and live in the mainland areas like Menumbok and so on.

“All these we need to study thoroughly, because if it does not add up to the value of the actual bridge construction cost the proposed bridge will actually not bring any benefit.”

Muhyiddin said he had actually brought up the matter to the Federal Cabinet.

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Muhyiddin, Musa and Yee talking to the elderly during the walkabout at Jalan Pantai yesterday.

Govt aware of Sabah's poor road maintenance

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He also urged parties like universities which have done studies related to the Labuan-Menumbok bridge proposal to forward their research papers so that the government could use this to compare with the one currently being done.

In the meantime, the Federal Government through the Transport Ministry has taken action to ease the burden of Labuan-Menumbok ferry commuters through the ferry fare reduction by 50 per cent.

The matter was brought up by a local researcher who said based on findings from two studies since 2009, there is a need for it.

On the call for uniform Federal allowance for Federal civil servants working in Sabah, Muhyiddin said the Federal Cabinet is presently studying the matter but that whatever the decision would be subject to the Federal budget provisions. The limitation in terms of allocation for construction and upgrading of lanes of roads faced by Public Works Department in Sabah was also brought up to his attention but he said the matter is already part of things the government is looking at annually.

He urged the State Government to bring up the matter to the Works Ministry or other relevant Ministries to enable it to provide bigger allocation, but that this would be subject to the Ministry's financial capability.

Muhyiddin said the government will also look at the culture of road maintenance which seems to be not existing in the country, thus resulting in poor management of roads which in turn caused many to be damaged, much to the anger of road users.

On the poor Internet broadband penetration in Sabah despite the government setting a target to increase it to 50 per cent by end of this year, Muhyiddin said he will bring it to the immediate attention of Datuk Seri Dr Rais Yatim (Information, Communication, Arts and Culture Minister) as they would not be able to achieve the target considering there is only one more month before the year ends.

The person who raised this said the present Internet broadband penetration rate in Sabah was just 38 per cent and the services are poor despite the government's announcement to have the rate increased.

On the call for a review on the renewal period for work permits for Federal civil servants in Sabah, he said it is for the State Government to decide.

Earlier, in his speech, Muhyiddin assured that the Federal Government will continue to give support to the rural transformation programmes especially in Sabah. He said this year the government allocated RM255.7million or 26pc of the overall allocated under the programme for implementing more than 2,000 transformation projects statewide.

"The government has also allocated various other incentives under National Budget for 2013 to increase the prosperity level of the rakyat in Sabah," he said.

He said the public service members' concern and dedication has led to the Government's success in implementing various touch-point programmes meant for increasing the prosperity level of the rakyat in Sabah, like the Bantuan Rakyat 1Malaysia (BR1M) which involved RM2.6 billion in allocation where in Sabah it benefited nearly 390,000 people (equivalent to RM1.95million).

Muhyiddin hoped the public service members would learn and understand

the truth about current issues raised by certain irresponsible parties, and what the government's actual stands are and explain these to the community.

He said they also need to inform the people and voters in Sabah that the Federal Government will continue to provide various facilities and programmes for assisting and improving their welfare and prosperity as proven and committed to under Budget 2013.

"The rakyat and public service members in Sabah will continue to enjoy bigger benefits, through the welfare programmes when the Barisan Nasional Government gets the full support from all during the coming General Election," he said, while encouraging all the Federal and State public service members to register as voters, if they have yet do so, and support the Barisan Nasional Government. Chief Minister Datuk Seri Musa Aman, State Cabinet members and State Secretary Tan Sri Sukarti Wakiman, among others, were also present.