

Happy hours on the road

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KUALA LUMPUR: It's the end of the road for the dreaded peak hour jams from Batu Caves to Ulu Klang.

Motorists will no longer be caught in their cars for hours as there is now an alternative route to enter the city with the opening of the Duta-Ulu Klang (Duke) highway.

Motorists can use the 18km long highway for free till Feb 8, before a RM2 per trip toll is imposed for six years.

Works Minister Datuk Mohd Zin Mohamed said the highway is expected to accommodate 50,000 vehicles daily.

"It can take a maximum of 120,000 cars daily," he said yesterday after launching the Duke highway at the Ayer Panas toll plaza.

He said the Duke highway is an alternative route for motorists going from Jalan Duta to Jalan Kuching, Greenwood and the Hillview interchange.

Zin said that the highway is connected to seven elevated interchanges at Jalan Duta, Jalan Kuching, Sentul Pasar, Setiawangsa, Hillview, Bandar Dalam and Greenwood.

There are three toll plazas along the highway: Plaza Batu, Plaza Ayer Panas, and Sentul Pasar.

"The highway operates an open system whereby motorists are required to pay toll only once to any destination.

"This means 46 per cent of

this highway is toll free," he said.

The Duke highway, which has three main sections, starts from the North Klang Valley Expressway in Jalan Duta and ends at the Middle Ring Road II in the east of Kuala Lumpur and Batu Caves.

However, for now motorists can use only 12.7km of the highway at Ayer Panas and Sentul Pasar.

The other part of the highway, which is near Batu Caves, will be open in three months' time.

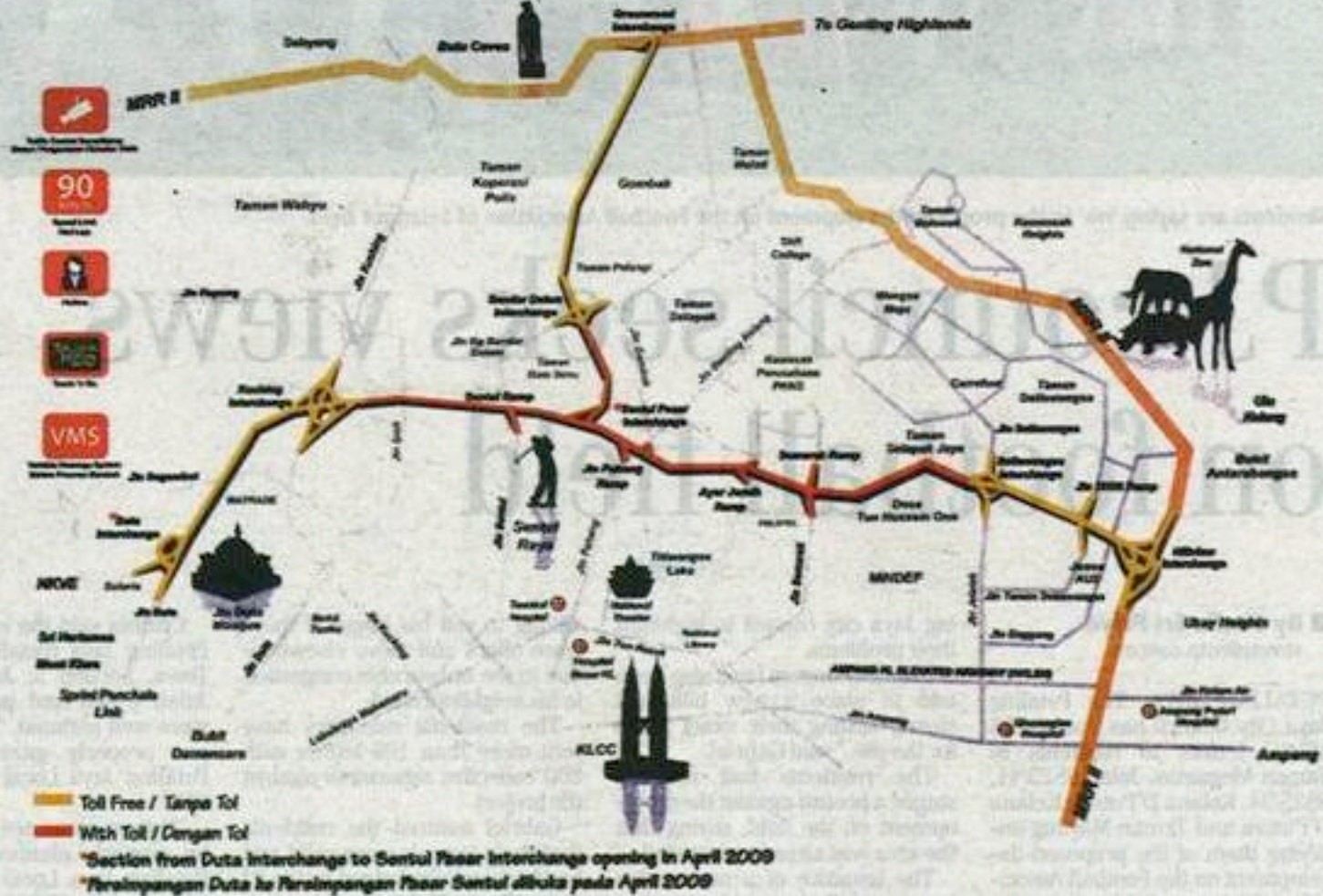
Mohd Zin hopes the Duke highway will become an alternative route for residents in the Klang Valley, especially for those heading towards the city centre.

Duke Highway is owned by Konsortium Lebuhraya Utara Timur Kuala Lumpur Sdn Bhd (Kesturi). The company took three years and spent RM892 million to build the highway with land acquisition costing RM255 million.

Mohd Zin said the concession for the Duke highway would be made public.

"If the public is interested in viewing the concessionaire documents for the Duke highway, they can come and check it in the ministry's library," he said.

Kesturi managing director Datuk Haris Omn Hussein said the Duke highway will be monitored 24 hours daily for the safety of road users and will be equipped with amenities such as surau, restrooms,



and parking lots.

The highway will ease traffic along:

- Jalan Duta
- Jalan Kuching
- Jalan Pahang
- Jalan Semarak
- Jalan Jelatek
- Middle Ring Road II (near the Hillview Interchange).



The Duke highway offers an alternative route into Kuala Lumpur.