

More lanes needed for Jalan Tun Fuad Stephens in KK, says former Sabah CM

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KOTA KINABALU: One of the city's key traffic arteries, Jalan Tun Fuad Stephens, needs a comprehensive lane expansion rather than quick bridge repairs, says former chief minister Datuk Seri Yong Teck Lee.

Following the closure of one lane on the dual carriageway to replace a damaged structure with a temporary Bailey bridge, Yong urged the state government to upgrade the entire road, which was originally built in the 1970s, to meet modern traffic demands.

"The upgrading of Jalan Tun Fuad Stephens, known locally as the Likas coastal road, from the Perkasa Roundabout in town to Yayasan Sabah should be prioritised as it is a critical dual carriageway linking the city centre to the seat of government at Menara Kinabalu, the Legislative Assembly, Universiti Malaysia Sabah and major commercial and residential centres," he said.

The Sabah Progressive Party (SAPP) president said the structural failure and closure of the bridge at km 2.85 along Jalan Tun Fuad Stephens indicates that other aging bridges along the same stretch could face similar risks.

"Our authorities must not turn a blind eye to this alarming sign of bridges that have already outlived their lifespan," he warned.

"The bridge at km 2.85 that is now unsafe was built during the era of the original Yayasan Sabah bridge, which was demolished about 20 years ago due to safety concerns and replaced," Yong noted.

He described the temporary Bailey bridge as a short-term measure that fails to address chronic congestion, urging the state government to widen the entire coastal road by adding additional lanes and rebuilding old bridges.

Yong added that the Public Works Department (PWD) had already drawn up plans for the upgrade five years ago.

"The then state infrastructure minister Datuk Seri Bung Moktar Radin had assured me personally that the Ministry would take up the matter. It is now only a matter of funding," he said.

He highlighted that traffic diversions caused by the bridge closure have severely worsened congestion around Likas Bay, the City Mosque roundabout, the Jalan Istiadat roundabout and Signal Hill.

"Aggravated traffic jams now hit Kampung Likas, where motorists take shortcuts to Jalan Tuaran to avoid the Likas Bay area," Yong said.

He also urged authorities to investigate whether heavy vehicles transporting imported cars from the old Kota Kinabalu port contributed to the bridge's deterioration and to make their findings public.