

Labuan-Sabah bridge project

RM5m UMS study flawed; so a new RM18m study

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LABUAN: An allocation of RM18 million has been approved by the Economic Planning Unit (EPU) in the Prime Minister's Department for a study on the review of the long-awaited Labuan-Sabah bridge project, according to Labuan Umno Youth Chief Dato' Mohd Rafi Alli Hassan.

The RM18 million study will be in addition to the previous RM5 million study carried out by University Malaysia Sabah students few years back.

The RM5 million study is said to be incomplete with many shortcomings. Thus, a new allocation has been approved and authorities are now waiting for the money to be released by the Ministry of Finance.

He did not say who would conduct the new study.

Rafi urged Umno Youth Chief Khairy Jamaluddin, who officiated the division's Umno wings' here, recently, to look into the revival of the project.

He said that no action was taken until recently when Labuan Member of Parliament Datuk Rozman Isli brought the issue to light and pushed for the approval of the project in Parliament.

The allocation would be used for the study of the bridge that will be connected from Tanjung Purun, Labuan to Pulau Daat and finally to Mempakul, Sabah.

Rafi is hopeful that the project would begin its first phase before the elections are called. He said over 10,000 locals have been retrenched during the oil and gas (O&G) slump. Private sectors have mostly employed foreigners and locals have been cut off.

Rafi suggested that Labuan should start demanding private sectors to prioritise locals in terms of work opportunities.

He said Labuan should emulate what Sarawak has done to Petronas, whereby the State Government has imposed a moratorium on the issuance of work permits to non-Sarawakian Petronas workers.

The agreement was reached after Petronas was under heavy criticism by Sarawakians following reports that the national oil company had retrenched 13 Sarawakian workers and that it did not prioritise locals in its hiring.

The agreement also assured prioritisation of Sarawakians in Petronas' employment in the State and increased places for Sarawakians in Universiti Teknologi Petronas (UTP).