

## Liow: Singapore to reduce levy on April 1

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KUALA LUMPUR: Singapore will reduce the levy for commercial vehicles and toll charges at the Second Link – which connects Tanjung Kupang to Tuas in Singapore – beginning April 1.

Transport Minister Dato' Sri Liow Tiong Lai said although Malaysia would implement the levy reduction on Feb 13, Singapore needed time to make the necessary adjustments.

“They will match our reduced rates but it is effective only on April 1. We will wait for their announcement but we will begin first. “We have reduced up to 80%, so when Singapore matches ours, the rate will be much attractive for the users of the Second Link and ease traffic at the Causeway,” Liow told reporters after launching a road safety campaign yesterday in conjunction with Chinese New Year.

He also thanked the Singapore government for promptly expressing its wish to match the toll rate. Yesterday, Singapore announced it would revise toll rates for all vehicles (except motorcycles) using its Tuas Checkpoint, starting April 1, following Malaysia's move.

On Friday, the Prime Minister's Office in Malaysia announced a RM50 levy for outbound and inbound commercial vehicles using the Second Link; the amount is a significant cut from the existing RM200 (outbound) and RM100 (inbound).

The announcement included a reduction in toll charges at the Second Link between 47% and 82% for all vehicles (except motorcycles) during off-peak hours (10am-3pm and 11pm-5am).

The rates for commercial vehicles, categorised under Classes 2 and 3, will also be lowered to match those at the Causeway. In Johor Baru, Johor Indian Business Association president P. Sivakumar, who is also Malaysian Indian Commerce Association adviser, said lower transportation charges would help to reduce the operating costs of businesses.

“The latest move should be a win-win situation, not only for the providers but also the end users,” he said yesterday. Since Jan 1, Malaysia has removed toll charges at the Johor Causeway for the Eastern Dispersal Link and effective Feb 1, Singapore has reduced toll charges for all vehicles (except motorcycles) entering the republic via the Woodlands checkpoint.

Johor South SME Association founding president Teh Kee Sin agreed that transport providers should start reducing their charges. “Previously, they claimed to have to review their charges due to the toll surge; now, they have no excuse not to cut charges,” he said.