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LATAR concessionaire sees rising traffic volume

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KUALA SELANGOR: Toll concessionaire KL-Kuala Selangor Expressways Bhd (KLSERB), which is 50% owned by Bina Puri Holdings Bhd, expects traffic volume on the newly opened 35km highway that links Kuala Lumpur with Ipoh in the west to at least meet its initial forecast set four years ago.

Chief executive officer Amran Amir said about two million vehicles had used the highway since it was officially opened on June 13.

But toll collection only started on Sept 1 after the Hari Raya holidays, and the company would need a few more months before it has a clear indication on the number of toll-paying commuters.

"The initial figures are encouraging, but we are not there yet," Amran told reporters yesterday after a signing ceremony with Touch n' Go Sdn Bhd in Bestari Jaya (formerly Batang Berjuntai), near here, to implement electronic toll collection system on the new highway.

He said the company expects to see a doubling in the number of vehicles on LATAR Expressway from the current estimate of about 30,000 vehicles a day.

Amran, however, did not offer any timetables to achieve the target.

The dual carriageway cost RM958 million to complete, and KLSERB was awarded a 40-year concession by the government under a build-operate-transfer (BOT) scheme.

Known as the LATAR Expressway, it has direct link to the North-South Expressway, the Guthrie Corridor Expressway (GCE) and the long-delayed West Coast Expressway.

The new highway is part of the Kuala Lumpur Outer Ring Road (KLORR), which is 75% completed.

The KLORR is made up of inter-connecting highways, including the KL-Ipoh part of the LATAR, the GCE, Kajang SILK Expressway, ELITE Highway, South Klang Valley Expressway and a proposed new highway that has yet to be awarded.