

SMART a better option to elevated highway

I REFER to the letter "Elevated highway would have been better" (*The Star*, Dec 22).

The Government-initiated Stormwater Management and Road Tunnel (SMART) is a dual purpose tunnel with the primary objective of addressing flooding in the KL Central Business District (CBD) around Masjid Jamek and Jalan Tun Perak.

Whenever it is not used for flood mitigation purposes, the megastructure is active with its motorway functionality. By optimising the usage of certain facilities will result in savings in many ways instead of creating wastage if not utilised.

That is what the SMART has been doing all these years and has proven to be an effective solution to mitigate floods and relieve congestion with a single infrastructure.

The idea of building two separate infrastructures as suggested does not translate into good economics of scale. If a single elevated highway were to be built during that time, it would have cost more than RM1bil with land acquisition as compared to the SMART's overall cost of RM1.9bil, of which only RM600mil was for the motorway component.

In terms of its operations, it is true that it needs to be closed for stormwater diversion whenever there is a need. For 2011, there were 14 closures and that also showed how many times the CBD would possibly have been flooded if not for SMART.

The dissemination of information prior to each closure is done quite widely via radio announcements, Variable Message Signages, printed media, twitter and also its website.

Over the years, the public is more alert on the mediums to check on the motorway's availability for their usage.

Nevertheless, the SMART management is always looking into ways to improve its services.

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