

SMART closure a costly affair

Repair and cleaning bill for tunnel reaches RM800,000 after latest floods

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KUALA LUMPUR: It is a costly affair each time the Stormwater Management and Road Tunnel (SMART) is closed and re-opened to traffic, with the bill "rising up" to a whopping RM800,000 for this week's closure.

The facility has been closed three times so far this year.

We have to pay a much higher rate to our contractors as they have to deliver the job very quickly at a short notice.

—MOHD NOOR MOHD ALI

It has been on "moderate mode" a total of 20 times this year when it is closed for several hours each time when a flood alert is on, but no cost was involved during these instances.

The tunnel's toll operations and public relations manager, Mohd Noor Mohd Ali, said RM500,000 was spent to repair damage to high-tech equipment inside the tunnel caused by flood debris, while cleaning of the motorways came up to RM300,000.

He said that each time the 9.7km-long tunnel was switched to full stormwater mode, special equipment and extra workers were needed later to clean the tunnel on a

round-the-clock basis to get it re-opened.

"There is a huge amount of mud and sludge which we have to get rid of before the motorways can be re-opened to traffic.

"We have to pay a much higher rate to our contractors as they have to deliver the job very quickly at a

short notice," he added.

He said that the latest two-day closure on Monday due to floods saw large debris such as furniture and trees swept into the tunnel, damaging costly equipment.

"Inside, there are CCTVs, temperature monitors and air vents, besides various other underwater

equipment," Mohd Noor added. He said the tunnel was closed on the first Wednesday of every month in the wee hours for routine inspection.

It is estimated that the tunnel draws an average of 38,000 vehicles daily going in and out of the Kuala Lumpur city centre.

It is the longest stormwater tunnel in South-East Asia and second longest in Asia.

The main objective of the tunnel is to solve the problem of flash floods in Kuala Lumpur and also to reduce traffic jams along Jalan Sungai Besi and the Loke Yew flyover in Pudu during rush hour.



Immediate task: Workers cleaning the SMART of mud and sludge after the motorway was closed due to floods early this week.