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# Special task force set up to curb state's perennial power problem

By **BALQIS JAMALUDIN**

**KOTA KINABALU:** A special task force has been set up to address Sabah's perennial power problem, which is besieged with old supply system.

The team is headed by the Deputy Energy, Green Technology and Water Minister Dato' Seri Mahdzir Khalid, who described the State power supply as unsatisfactory.

"The task force will study, monitor and advise on the types of planning and implementation of power supply projects for Sabah including on issues like power tariff and Sabah Electricity Sdn Bhd's (SESB) turnaround," he told reporters after chairing the task force meeting here yesterday.

The task force with its acronym PPPES will gather all their findings and submit them to the Minister, Datuk Seri Dr. Maximus Ongkili, who will bring it up with the Federal Cabinet for decisions.

Mahdzir said the PPPES is

represented by several Members of Parliament representing various zones in Sabah, officers and engineers from Energy Commission and Sabah Electricity Sdn Bhd (SESB) together with their counterparts from various federal and state ministries and agencies.

Addressing Sabah's power problem, Mahdzir said the federal government acknowledged that the State was still facing power interruptions and power shortage including in Labuan.

He said there were three main causes to the problem and they included the low reserve margin which has affected the planning of power generation projects unable to be carried out.

"The problem is also compounded by the weak distribution of power resulting in emergency load shedding and power theft.

"The ministry has taken mitigating steps like implementing short, medium and

long-term plans from this year until 2025 which are undertaken by SESB," he said.

Among the short-term measures for this year and next year is the commissioning of the Kimanis Power station which can generate 385 MegaWatt (MW) and SPR Energy power station with 100MW along with Sepanggar Bay Power Corporation

(SBPC) which contributes 100MW. SESB also relies on Kubota Power Station in Tawau with its 64 MW production.

As for medium-term projects for 2013-2019, Mahdzir said the government would rely on the Ulu Padas Hydroelectricity Project which is capable of generating 180 MW and the Tawau Power Renewal Project which has a capacity of 30 MW.

"All these projects need huge funding to ensure that they are smoothly implemented," he said.

On power interruption, he

said SESB recorded 294.40 minute of System Average Interruption Duration Index (SAIDI) as of August 31, and SESB is confident of achieving 450 minutes this year.

On another issue, Mahdzir said the ministry is discussing and taking a relook at the controversial coal plant project in Tawau, which was supposed to be implemented five years ago.

He said the project has received protests from non-governmental groups who claimed that the plant would affect the environment.

"We will have a relook at all the aspects as the plant if implemented will have a long-term benefit to address the power shortage in Sabah," he said.

Present were the ministry's deputy secretary general (Energy) Dato' Badaruddin Mahyudin, SESB managing director Abd Razak Sallim, and its senior general manager (asset management) Ir. Ahmad Fuad Md Kasim.

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Mahdzir (second from right) discussing with Badaruddin (right)), Abd Razak (second from left) and Ahmad Fuad on the task force