

Headline	Power outage cripples Sabah		
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Massive blackout hits most parts of state, leaves over 500,000 without electricity

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KOTA KINABALU: A massive power blackout crippled most parts of Sabah and Labuan FT, leaving over 500,000 consumers without electricity from 11.05am.

The simultaneous tripping along Sabah's east-west transmission grid disrupted many government counter services while hospitals had to scrap elective surgeries as generators were used to operate essential services like the emergency unit, Intensive Care Unit and operating theatres.

Traffic police, particularly in Kota Kinabalu, were quick to respond to the power failure as they were deployed at key traffic intersections to guide traffic ahead of Friday's peak school hour and office break at 11.30am.

The latest outage left Sabahans, already weary of excuses for the

frequent power outages in the state, calling for the Sabah Electricity Sdn Bhd (SESB) to resolve the power woes once and for all.

SESB managing director Abdul Razak Salim described the latest power failure as an "unexpected" incident and said they have yet to identify the cause of the trip that shut down the statewide grid.

He explained that the company's grid system was designed to prevent simultaneous tripping, so they were trying to find out how it could have happened.

"We are carrying out our investigations to identify the cause," he told reporters late yesterday to announce measures taken to restore electricity in the state.

He said a total of 731MW from current capacity of 877MW were lost in the blackout and they were

forced to activate their generation plants at various districts to restore power locally.

He said Ranau district was the first to resume full power by 12.15pm followed by Tawau and Labuan at 1pm, Keningau (1.50pm) and Semporna (1.55pm).

He said Sandakan got back power at 2.35pm but faced rampant trippings after that.

Abdul Razak said their engineers were working to normalise power in the two major towns of Sandakan and Lahad Datu.

However, only 70% of power resumed in the state capital by 3pm and was expected to normalise by 7pm to 9pm.

"Once we have got our regional (district) power stations stabilised, we will reconnect it to the grid

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later," Razak added.

Razak said consumers who could prove that their electrical appliances were damaged due to the blackout caused by negligence in the company could apply for compensation.

"Consumers will have to go through the required process, including lodging a police report first, then apply at our office and so forth," he said.

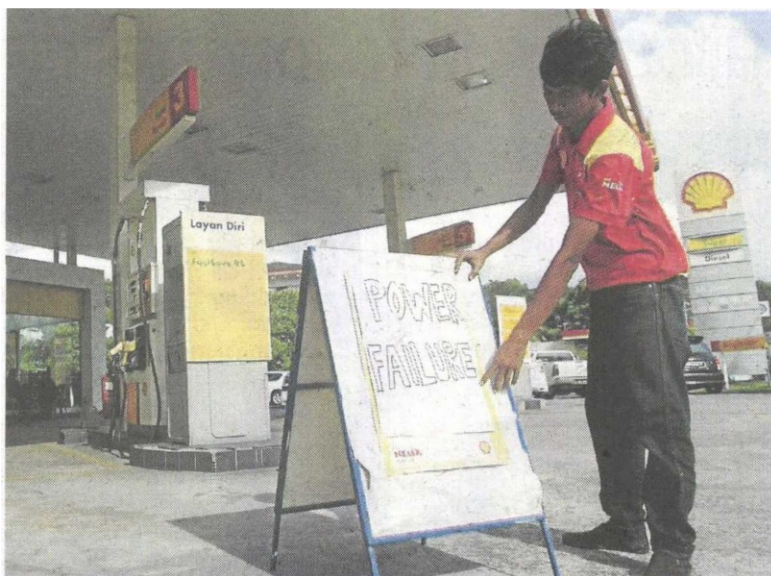
Razak, however, explained that to ask for compensation following a blackout which occurred due to the system's weaknesses would be more

complicated, but that should not stop them from applying.

The last statewide power failure was on Sept 25 last year though many localised power disruptions occurred from time to time including after Wednesday's floods in the west coast of the state.

Meanwhile, Energy, Green Technology and Water Minister Datuk Seri Dr Maximus Johnity Ongkili said that he will ask Tenaga Nasional Berhad (TNB) and the Energy Commission (EC) to determine what actually caused the blackout across

Sabah. This was because according to the SESB engineers, the blackout should not have happened, he told reporters at the opening of the Tawau parliamentary office at Bandar Sri Indah here yesterday.



Service interrupted: A petrol station worker putting up a sign to inform customers that the station was closed due to the power failure.

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Braving the heat: Patrons eating in a restaurant in Kota Kinabalu which was operating without electricity.