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Koh-Rebate

PULAU PINANG GOVT FIRM ON REQUEST FOR REBATE

PULAU PINANG, Oct 22 (Bernama) -- The Pulau Pinang Government will not budge from its request for a rebate from Tenaga Nasional Bhd (TNB) to consumers in the state for losses suffered during the 10-day power blackout in June last year.

Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon said the request was made following a motion passed by the State Legislative Assembly late last year.

"We have to go back to the assembly before deciding on the next course of action," he said. The State Assembly sitting has been set for Nov 27.

"I will seek further clarification on the matter," he told reporters after opening a seminar organised by SMI Finance Connect here today.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday that he did not think TNB would entertain other requests (for a rebate), saying the utility company had agreed to give a 10 per cent rebate for the Aug 3 peninsula-wide blackout following pressure from the government.

Dr Koh said he had written fresh letters to Dr Mahathir, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and Energy, Telecommunications and Posts Minister Datuk Leo Moggie yesterday to put on record the state's request to apply a similar compensation formula as the blackout involved the whole island.

In June last year, power supply to the island was disrupted for 10 days after all the nine power cables under the Penang bridge caught fire, cutting off power supply to housing estates, factories, offices and shops on the island.

Following the incident, the State Assembly passed a resolution urging TNB to make ex-gratia payments to the affected consumers.

However, TNB did not respond to the motion but instead announced that RM1.7 billion had been allocated to upgrade the island's power distribution network.

Dr Koh said: "We are not asking to set a precedent but just as a goodwill gesture similar to what is offered to the Aug 3 nationwide blackout."

However, the final decision (on the request) was left to the Cabinet and TNB, he said.

While appreciating TNB's commitment to upgrade the power distribution system in the state, he said it was his duty as the Chief Minister to raise the sentiments of the people in the state.

-- BERNAMA

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