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Moggie-Rebate

TENAGA NASIONAL TO FORK OUT RM70 MILLION IN REBATE FOR AUG 3 BLACKOUT

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 16 (Bernama) -- Tenaga Nasional Berhad will pay a total of 10 per cent ex-gratia as rebate to its consumers affected by the peninsula-wide Aug 3 blackout, Energy, Telecommunications and Posts Minister Datuk Leo Moggie announced today.

It would cost Tenaga Nasional an estimated RM70 million, he told reporters after the weekly Cabinet meeting today which approved the rate proposed by the company.

A total of 4.2 million consumers can look forward to the rebate in their December 1996 and January 1997 bills at five per cent each month.

Moggie stressed that the rebate should not be mistaken for compensation by Tenaga Nasional and that it was only a "one-off" ex-gratia payment to those affected by the Aug 3 outage.

Earlier, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad told reporters at Parliament House that the decision should not be made a precedent.

"We acknowledge that everywhere in the world there is no responsibility attached to public utility (firms) for such incidents. But the government has a slightly different stand," he said.

Moggie said that only consumers registered with the utility company on Aug 3 would be eligible for the ex-gratia payment.

The "goodwill" ex-gratia should not be interpreted as admitting liability on Tenaga Nasional's part, he added.

It was only for the Aug 3 incident and should also not be seen as a precedent for future blackouts nor should it be apply to blackouts prior to that date.

Moggie said similar utility companies in other countries did not pay ex-gratia or compensation to their consumers when power breakdowns occurred, like what happened in the United States at about the same time as the Aug 3 blackout.

He said Tenaga Nasional would only pay compensation if it was proven in court that the Aug 3 blackout was caused by negligence.

The amount of compensation would then be decided by the court, he said.

Asked why the 10 per cent rebate was split over two months, he said that if the rebate was given in one month, it would affect the company's cash flow.

The 12-hour Aug 3 outage due to a faulty component at the Paka power station in Terengganu caused massive traffic jams in the major towns in the peninsula apart from forcing many factories and other establishments to stop operations.

Earlier, Tenaga Nasional executive chairman Datuk Ahmad Tajuddin Ali officially handed over the company's executive information system to the Energy, Telecommunications and Posts Ministry.

The on-line system, generated from Tenaga Nasional's Operational Information System would be used by the ministry in the planning and formulation of policies, regulatory and other related matters.

The system, which spans three areas of generation, transmission and distribution will also provide statistical reports on tariff as well as the breakdown in power supply. -- BERNAMA

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