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Tenaga willing to be main proponent in peninsula-Sumatera bridge

MALACCA, Sat. - Tenaga Nasional Berhad will play its part as one of the vital proponents in the construction of the bridge across the Straits of Malacca which will link Peninsular Malaysia and Sumatra.

Its executive chairman Datuk Dr Ahmad Tajuddin Ali said a feasibility study was being carried out on the construction of the bridge that would serve as an "Asean interconnection."

"We have successfully linked Penang with the mainland by making full use of the Penang bridge. We do not have problems in undertaking a similar task if given the go-ahead and opportunity by the government."

He was speaking to reporters after paying a courtesy call on Chief Minister Datuk Abu Zahar Isnin at the Malacca Municipal Council near here today.

Earlier this month, Malaysia and Indonesia unveiled plans to build a bridge across the Malacca Straits.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad disclosed this after talks with President Suharto of Indonesia on June 15 when attending the inaugural summit of the Heads of Government of the group of eight Islamic developing nations (D-8).

Dr Mahathir had said making the proposed bridge a reality would depend on a feasibility study being undertaken.

He had also said that it would be implemented if it was found to be feasible.

Dr Mahathir, however, did not give details on the proposed bridge.

The Straits of Malacca, which separates peninsular Malaysia from Sumatra, is one of Southeast Asia's most vital trading routes.

The narrowest points between the two mainland are only 24km apart.

Presently ferry services link the two regions through Kukup in Johor, Malacca and Penang.

On the restructuring of Tenaga Nasional, Tajuddin said it would be an "on-going process" that would take place as and when the need arose.

"We have carried out several adaptations and will continue to do so if we feel there is a need for it in our efforts to further strengthen the organisation."

Earlier, Tajuddin said Abu Zahar was satisfied with the progress of Tenaga Nasional's projects in Malacca.

"We are going to spend about RM203 million for power generation in the State this year and another RM250 million for next year. This does not include the management costs of the projects."

Among the projects which have been completed was its main intake station in Batu Berendam which cost RM70 million.

Conventional open yard stations, each costing RM25 million, will be completed soon in Jasin and Telok Mas.

(END)