

# Outage hits five states

SUN, 2 - SEP 2003

**LANGKAWI:** The power outage that affected most of the Peninsula yesterday lasted just a few hours, but this should be the last time such an incident occurs.

This warning was given by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad after supply to five states was disrupted.

Mahathir said although Tenaga Nasional Bhd (TNB) managed to restore power quickly, it should ensure that such a major disruption does not recur.

"We must know why it happened, study what led to the incident so that we can prevent it from happening again," he said at the Langkawi International Airport in Padang Mat Sirat here before leaving for Kuala Lumpur after a two-day visit.

"Looks like we cannot escape the blackout. Recently, there was a blackout in New York, London ... now it's our turn. Looks like we don't have adequate knowledge about electricity, such a breakdown occurring so fast," Mahathir commented.

He said that TNB president and CEO Datuk Pian Sukro had briefed him on the situation.

"It's good that they've managed to restore supply quickly but measures have to be taken to prevent a recurrence."

Mahathir's sentiments were echoed by his

deputy, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

Speaking in **PUTRAJAYA**, Abdullah said TNB should do something to avoid a recurrence of the outage.

"That's definite. That must be their work procedure. Power supply should not be allowed to be disrupted, but if it happens, we must know the reasons," he added.

Penang, Perak, Kelantan, Perlis and Kedah were left without electricity at 9.58am when the transmission line from Bukit Beruntung in Selangor and Batu Gajah in Perak tripped.

However, by 3pm, power had been restored to all these states.

At a press conference in **KUALA LUMPUR**, Pian said the tripping was due to glitches in the power distribution system and not caused by sabotage or "low voltage capacity".

Policemen had to work hard to control traffic as traffic lights went out, while firemen were on standby.

Abdullah, who is Home Minister, said the incident should not be linked to a breach of national security.

"I don't want to make assumptions on the cause of the power outage. I've asked for thorough investigations to be made and after com

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pletion of the findings to the government as soon as possible," he said.

In **Penang**, the state fire and rescue department received distress calls from 19 locations reporting people stuck in lifts in highrise apart-

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ments. All of them were rescued by building maintenance staff or fire department personnel.

While it was a holiday for most states, people in Kedah and Kelantan returned to work yesterday.

Power supply to Kelantan was restored from 11.32am,

Perak and Kedah noon, Penang 12.45pm and Perlis 1pm.

And as if to prove that when it rains, it pours, power was also disrupted to several areas in the Klang Valley, including the KL International Airport (KLIA) yesterday.

Four domestic and two

international flights were rescheduled.

Pian said KLIA received power from another supplier and TNB acted only as the "standby power supplier".

Pian said disruptions in Shah Alam and Klang yesterday could be due to localised problems.