

Bakun power for peninsula

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RM9bil project to transmit electricity

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SUBANG JAYA: Two multi-billion ringgit undersea cables will be laid to transmit electricity from Sarawak to the peninsula to boost the country's energy needs as well as to reduce the cost of the power supply.

Energy, Water and Communications Minister Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik said Petronas had already indicated that there would be insufficient supply of gas "if we were to build more gas-fuelled plants" and prices of coal would remain volatile.

He said the Bakun dam in Sarawak would be ready by the end of 2009.

"Even if you lay the cables today, it will take five years," he told reporters after opening the International Energy Conference for Sustainable Asia and launching the National Suria 1000 programme here yesterday.

He said the cost of laying the cables was estimated to be around RM9bil.

Regarding the mechanism of transmitting electricity from Sarawak to the peninsula, he said the ministry was preparing a proposal on the matter.

He said the Cabinet committee on the planning and development of electricity and tariffs was looking into the details of building the cables and transporting the power, among others.

Electricity generated at Bakun has to travel close to 700km to southern Sarawak and another 700km undersea to Johor, where the country's main electricity grid is located at Yong Peng.

On the National Suria 1000 programme, Dr Lim said from Friday, house owners seeking alternative power could bid to have solar energy panels installed on their roofs.

The bidding, which ends on March 30 next year, will allow 1,000 homes and offices - new or existing ones - to be fixed with solar photovoltaic (PV) roofs to generate energy from sunlight.

"If you complain that the electricity price is going up, I promise you, it will go up and

up and up. So, turn to solar energy," he said.

He added that the solar energy panel could be hooked to the main national grid and allows excess energy to be sold to Tenaga Nasional Bhd.

Dr Lim said the programme provides the first caller a discount of up to 75% of the price of the PV system.

Pusat Tenaga Malaysia chief executive officer Dr Anuar Abdul Rahman said the cost of a 1kWp PV system was at least RM28,000, of which 30% was the cost of installation.

He said a household normally used between 3kWp and 5kWp a month.

For further information e-mail suria1000@ptm.org.my or visit www.ptm.org.my.