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TNB steps up grid modernisation as demand accelerates

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KUALA LUMPUR: Tenaga Nasional Bhd (TNB) is stepping up investments in grid infrastructure and accelerating network modernisation to strengthen Malaysia's electricity supply system, enhance renewable energy integration and meet future demand.

It's president and chief executive officer Datuk Seri Shamsul Ahmad said forward planning, faster project execution and stronger collaboration were essential to developing a smarter, more flexible and resilient national grid.

Speaking during the "The Grid of Tomorrow" panel at Singapore International Energy Week (SIEW) 2026, he said TNB was investing ahead of demand while balancing the need for affordable, sustainable and reliable electricity supply.

The utility serves approximately 11 million customers and has allocated about RM43 billion for network investments under Regulatory Period 4 (RP4), covering 2025 to 2027.

He said the investments would support the development of critical infrastructure, including the 500-kilovolt (kV) National Grid Backbone, targeted for completion by 2030, and the 100-megawatt (MW)/400-megawatt-hour (MWh) Santong Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) in Terengganu.

TNB began developing the National Grid Backbone in August 2026, with the approximately 500-kilometre transmission system designed to connect strategic locations along the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia. Upon completion, it will be the country's longest 500kV transmission system, strengthening grid capacity, flexibility and reliability.

Meanwhile, the Santong BESS, which commenced operations in April 2026, is Malaysia's first grid-connected battery energy storage system. Located in Dungun, Terengganu, it can deliver 100 MW of power for up to four hours, providing additional flexibility to manage electricity supply and support the integration of renewable energy sources.

At the regional level, Shamsul highlighted the growing momentum behind the ASEAN Power Grid (APG), supported by initiatives such as the Laos-Thailand-Malaysia-Singapore Power Integration Project (LTMS-PIP) and bilateral electricity trading arrangements between Malaysia and Singapore.

The LTMS-PIP, which began in June 2022, marked the first multilateral cross-border electricity trade involving four ASEAN countries, enabling renewable hydropower from Laos to be transmitted to Singapore through Thailand and Malaysia.

Its subsequent expansion has facilitated greater electricity trading, including supply from Malaysia to Singapore.

Malaysia and Singapore are also pursuing a second electricity interconnection between Peninsular Malaysia and Singapore, with a potential capacity of up to 2,000 MW.

TNB, Singapore's SP Group and Singapore Energy Interconnections signed a joint development agreement in October 2025 to undertake a full feasibility study for the proposed link, targeted to commence operations by 2030.

Shamsul said closer coordination among ASEAN governments, utilities and regulators, alongside aligned policies, regulatory frameworks and technical standards, would be crucial to translating regional ambitions into an interconnected and resilient electricity network. – Bernama

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