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Pretty poles of power

A RM500mil project to boost power supply in Penang will not only raise the state's economy but also pull in visitors with its special betel nut-shaped monopoles, which, when lit up, could be a tourist attraction. > **See report on page 6 by IMRAN HILMY**

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Poles bring glow to bridge



Electrifying pull: The piling works being done for the monopole transmission towers next to the Penang Bridge. The RM500m project is expected to be completed in November. — CHAN BOON KAI/The Star

Penang to have decorative lights on transmission towers

By **IMRAN HILMY**
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GEORGE TOWN: The Penang Bridge, long an attraction in the state, will get an electrifying new look soon with the installation of aesthetic decorative lights on transmission towers, with several designed to look like betel nuts at the middle span.

The installation of these 31 monopole towers, including six at the mid-span of the 13.5km-long Penang Bridge, Malaysia's second longest, will be completed by November.

The first two towers are already up as of today.

Besides providing an extra sparkle to the bridge, the transmission towers, costing RM500mil, serve a critical role as a catalyst

for Penang's development as they are capable of supplying 2,000 megawatt (MW) of electricity to the island side of the state. The existing firm capacity on the island is 1,130MW.

Fittingly enough, "The Light" waterfront area on the island, near the Batu Uban army camp, will house the substation, which will receive the 275,000kV overhead line transmission from the Prai power station main inlet.

"This new injection of capacity will ensure Penang has additional electricity supply from the national grid.

"It will not only benefit households but also spur economic growth and the commercial industries here too," said Penang Tenaga Nasional Berhad general manager (regulatory and stake-

holder management division) Datuk Ismail Lathifi Teh.

Ismail said the 8.5km monopole transmission towers (26 at sea and five on land) are the second of their kind after the one in Melaka, which connects Pantai Siring to Pulau Besar, a distance of 4.2km.

By implementing an overhead line project, he said it would result in a higher capacity compared to under-bridge cables or submarine cables.

"This project is well on schedule with work now at 58%," he said.

Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers (FMM) Penang chapter chairman Datuk Seri Lee Teong Li believed that the new TNB project could boost the state's growth to another level.

"As we keep on expanding with more development, housing and commercial projects coming up, the extra edge in terms of electricity will benefit us in the future," he said.

Lee said it would also pave the way for Penang to have a sustainable and stable power supply.

"This will also attract more investors to the state," he said.

Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow inaugurated the TNB project in September 2022.

Penang Bridge, which opened in 1985, is the first road link between the peninsula and the island.

It has hosted many sports events, including the Penang Bridge International Marathon since 1986 and the Penang Fellowship Ride for cycling enthusiasts.