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Maintaining Sabah's energy infrastructure

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IT has come to my attention that there are misconceptions regarding SESB's dedication to maintaining assets. Contrary to misguided beliefs, asset maintenance is indeed a top priority for SESB.



Allow me to shed light on events that

underscore our dedication to this crucial aspect of our operations.

Since the conclusion of last year, we have been diligently addressing issues concerning our infrastructure, particularly two transmission towers in Ranau located at Kg. Randagongand Kg Nabutan, which were discovered to be damaged during routine inspection works.

The instability stemmed from sedimentation and active land movement around the site of the 275kV transmission tower.

Recognizing the urgency of the situation, emergency replacement work commenced immediately.

Alongside our partners at Tenaga Nasional Berhad (TNB), we swiftly installed a temporary diversion tower known as the Emergency Restoration System (ERS).

This collaborative effort emphasises our unwavering commitment to safeguarding Sabah's energy infrastructure.

Subsequently, on February 7, 2024, we initiated the relocation of the ERS tower transmission line, ensuring the continuity of essential services.

The significance of restoring these towers cannot be overstated. The potential collapse of both towers would precipitate a critical energy crisis, adversely affecting the lives of the people of Sabah.

Nevertheless, it's important to note that the installation of ERS is not an unfamiliar territory for SESB. To date, SESB has successfully delivered over 50 similar projects, showcasing our expertise and dedication to mitigating potential crises.

Our collaborative efforts with TNB and the invaluable support from the state government, particularly the Royal Malaysian Air Force (TUDM), played a crucial role in expediting the project's progress.

TUDM's transportation of five container loads of equipment from Selangor to Sabah facilitated the timely execution of critical tasks.

However, the logistical challenges encountered during the transportation of equipment of the ERS towers proved to be formidable obstacles.

The condition of the roads, terrains and the isolated nature of the tower sites posed significant hindrances. Picture this, towering trees, uneven landscape and treacherous slopes, all standing between our teams and the crucial task at hand.

Given the inaccessible nature of the sites, conventional methods of transport proved futile. The absence of access roads meant that the 40-ton lorry used to carry containers with ERS equipment inside were unable to reach the towers, compelling our staffs to take matters into their own hands, manually carrying heavy equipment through dense forests and challenging landscapes.

Additionally, clearing the area to create pathways for equipment transportation also demanded considerable time and effort. It took approximately two weeks of meticulous work to prepare the terrain, further highlighting the magnitude of the challenges we faced.

Finally, on March 25th, through the collaborative efforts of SESB's internal experts and TNB, the relocation works were successfully completed.

This milestone not only ensured the stability of Sabah's energy infrastructure but also paved the way for the construction of two new transmission towers in Ranau, replacing those damaged by the recent incidents.

During my visit to the relocation site, I was deeply impressed by the unwavering dedication displayed by our personnel, many of whom were observing fasting during the holy month of Ramadan.

Despite the sweltering heat and challenging conditions, their commitment to duty remained resolute, an exemplary demonstration of professionalism and dedication that deserves the highest praise.

These recent events underscore the critical importance of projects like the Southern Link in bolstering Sabah's energy resilience. Currently, the 275-kilovolt Kolopis-Segaluid line serves as the sole transmission link between the east and west coasts of Sabah, supplying approximately 200 megawatts (MW) of electricity. However, the vulnerability of this single connection poses significant risks to the state's energy security.

The Southern Link project represents a vital step towards enhancing Sabah's energy stability. The proposed construction of a 330km 275kV transmission line from Sipitang to Tenom, extending to Kalabakan and Tawau, holds immense promise in fortifying the state's energy infrastructure.

While the implementation of the Southern Link project is slated for the coming year, its realization hinges upon the government's final decision on project implementation.

From Sabah's point of view, the project should be financed through a grant by the federal government as planned from the very beginning.

It's a long-awaited critical infrastructure to stabilise electricity in Sabah. As a matter of fact, the need for additional infrastructure to bolster the state's energy resilience cannot be overstated.

As such, we remain steadfast in our advocacy for this crucial undertaking, which promises to fortify Sabah's energy infrastructure for generations to come.