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Big push for energy integration

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Fadillah: Unified Asean grid a priority under chairmanship

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KUALA LUMPUR: With Malaysia at the helm of Asean this year, the bloc will step up its push for greater regional energy integration, said Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof.

In outlining Malaysia's vision for Asean's energy future, he said the country will leverage collective strengths to build a resilient and interconnected energy ecosystem that supports both economic growth and environmental sustainability.

"Malaysia will lead Asean in developing collaborative solutions that balance economic growth with environmental responsibility," said Fadillah, who is also Energy Transition and Water Transformation Minister.

He said this in his keynote address at the Asia Pacific Business Forum (APBF) 2025 organised by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) here yesterday.

Also present was Star Media Group Bhd's group chief executive officer Chan Seng Fatt, who

accepted the Asia Pacific Media Leadership Award for Sustainability on behalf of the newspaper.

Fadillah said a key priority under Malaysia's chairmanship is the expansion of the Asean Power Grid (APG), a long-standing vision to connect electricity networks across South-East Asia.

This, he said, would allow for seamless energy exchange and better utilisation of renewable energy resources among member states.

"By accelerating grid modernisation, strengthening transmission infrastructure and harmonising regulatory frameworks, we can unlock vast opportunities for cross-border renewable energy trade, reduce reliance on fossil fuels and enhance regional energy security," he added.

He said Malaysia also aims to spearhead discussions on green financing models to attract investments in large-scale solar, wind and hydro projects.

Fadillah said Malaysia will facilitate public-private partnerships (PPPs) and innovative financing mechanisms to position Asean as a leading destination for sustainable energy investments.



Big win: Fadillah (second from right) presenting the award to Chan at the Asia Pacific Business Forum 2025 in Kuala Lumpur. Looking on is (from left) UNESCAP Business Sustainable Network vice-chair Tan Sri Michael Yeoh and KSI Strategic Institute for Asia Pacific deputy chairman Datuk Seri Mohamed Iqbal Rawther. — ART CHEN/The Star

"With its strategic location, strong renewable energy capabilities and commitment to innovation, Malaysia is well-positioned to become Asean's epicentre for clean energy research, technology deployment and sustainable financing," he said.

As part of its Asean chairmanship role, Fadillah said Malaysia will promote itself as the regional hub for green hydrogen development by fostering research collaboration and infrastructure investments.

Malaysia will also work towards attracting multinational corporations and energy leaders to invest in Asean's clean energy sector, leveraging the nation's expertise in solar power, energy storage and carbon capture.

"Malaysia will also advance digitalisation and smart energy solu-

tions by integrating AI and IoT into its energy systems to enhance efficiency and grid reliability," Fadillah said.

He noted that Malaysia's chairmanship will not only strengthen Asean's internal cooperation but also elevate its voice in global sustainability platforms.

The country will lead the region's engagement with UNESCAP, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) and other key stakeholders, he said.

"Malaysia will advocate for increased access to climate financing for Asean's clean energy transition, as well as for technology transfer and capacity-building programmes.

"We will also push for greater integration of Asean economies

into global carbon markets to ensure competitiveness in a net-zero future," he added.

Fadillah emphasised that Asean's journey toward energy security, economic resilience and environmental sustainability is gaining momentum, and Malaysia is committed to driving that progress forward.

"This is a defining moment for Asean.

"By working together, leveraging our strengths and embracing bold climate action, we can transform our region into a beacon of sustainable development," he said.

"As Malaysia and the Asia Pacific move towards a greener future, we must embrace bold policies, foster international cooperation and harness the power of innovation."