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## Access to energy, electricity critical to drive development

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Access to energy and electricity is critical to drive the development of various sectors of the economy as well as to uplift socio-economic wellbeing of the public, especially in the rural areas, said Economic Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Azmin Ali.

He said realising its importance, Malaysia has sought to enhance rural electrification programmes by improving national coverage to 99 per cent by 2020.

Speaking at the second plenary session of the 8th Asian Ministerial Energy Roundtable which was held in Abu Dhabi,

United Arab Emirates yesterday, he said although the world needs more energy, concerns for fewer emission have been given more emphasis by economies.

"In the case of Malaysia, Petronas has been the conduit for providing energy security and accessibility to the Malaysian market through structured and prudent development of the country's oil and gas industry.

"This has helped to build domestic resilience that has allowed the country to address issues of energy security, affordability and sustainability effectively," he said.

His text speech was made

available to Bernama here.

Azmin said in Southeast Asia, energy is key to the realisation of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) that calls for a well-connected ASEAN to drive an integrated, competitive and resilient region.

He said ASEAN member countries had formed energy collaboration, including the ASEAN Power Grid to initiate multilateral electricity trade in at least one sub-region by 2018, as well as Trans ASEAN Gas Partnership to enhance connectivity for energy security and accessibility via pipelines and regasification terminals.