



12 FEB, 2026

Sabah pilot meter house scheme cuts electricity theft, stabilises supply

Borneo Post (KK), Malaysia



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SEMPORNA: After more than three decades without legitimate electricity supply, residents of Kampung Selamat here are relieved and happy to benefit from the implementation of a centralised meter house project by Sabah Electricity Sdn Bhd (Sabah Electricity), completed in August last year.

The innovative Sabah Electricity project, which selected Kampung Selamat as its pilot location in Sabah, was developed to address illegal electricity connections in squatter settlements.

Trader Muhd Dani Kaising, 62, said the project ended more than 35 years of hardship he had endured as a resident due to the lack of legal electricity supply, and he was grateful for the new facility.

"I am happy. Previously, I used a generator and only had electricity at night. I had to maintain it and buy fuel, sometimes the engine broke down, costs were high and power was only available at night. Now, we have electricity all day, a refrigerator, and even if I have to pay RM300 a month, I am willing. I do not want anyone stealing

electricity. I take care of my meter and do not allow others to tap into it because it is dangerous," he said when met by reporters here Wednesday.

Earlier, Sabah Electricity chief executive officer Datuk Mohd Yaakob Jaafar visited the centralised meter house project in the village.

Another resident, Abdul Muin, 67, said the electricity supply in the village has been more stable since the project was implemented last year.

"I am happy. Of course we want official electricity supply with proper meters, and it is safer. Thank you to the government," said the resident, who has lived in the village for more than 40 years.

Meanwhile, Mohd Yaakob told reporters that the project, valued at about RM266,000, was completed on Aug 7 last year and benefits 54 users.

He said the pilot project was implemented in Semporna after the district recorded the highest electricity theft rate in Sabah at 32 per cent.

"Electricity theft leads to frequent power disruptions in

surrounding areas, and through this project, estimated revenue losses of RM220,000 a year can be avoided.

"The System Average Interruption Duration Index (SAIDI) in the surrounding areas dropped from 87 disruptions (3.25 minutes per user) in 2024 to 32 disruptions (1.62 minutes per user) in 2025," he said.

He said the project was completed within a year and included the construction of a meter house, development of electricity supply infrastructure and consolidation of meters in a single location.

Mohd Yaakob said the project also introduced a community safe regulation concept, whereby residents in squatter areas with legitimate electricity supply monitor and safeguard their own electrical cables, indirectly helping curb electricity theft.

A similar project will be expanded to the squatter area of Kampung Delima in Kota Kinabalu starting this April, he said. — Bernama