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Chereh Dam solar plant `strategically important'

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Chereh Dam solar plant 'strategically important'

Project could help Malaysia export renewable energy expertise, says Citaglobal

ABU DHABI: The Chereh Dam floating solar project in Pahang could help Malaysia develop renewable energy (RE) expertise that can be exported to other markets, Citaglobal Sdn Bhd executive chairman and president Tan Sri Mohamad Norza Zakaria said.

He said the project, developed with Abu Dhabi Future Energy Company (Masdar), a United Arab Emirates state-owned renewable energy firm, would enable Citaglobal to leverage Masdar's experience in technology, project financing and large-scale project management.

"In the longer term, we hope the expertise developed in Malaysia can also be exported to other markets," he told Bernama in an exclusive interview on the sidelines of Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week 2026.

Mohamad Norza said the project was strategically important as Malaysia seeks to position itself as a renewable energy hub for Asean, with Citaglobal supporting the government's National Energy Transition Roadmap.

"Masdar's experience, including completed floating solar projects in Indonesia, provides continuity and confidence for this project in Malaysia.

"Floating solar is a niche technology, and participation in this partnership gives our team valuable exposure and learning opportunities."

He added that the project involves a sizeable financial commitment due to its scale.

"The long-term power purchase agreement signed with Tenaga Nasional Bhd provides revenue certainty and strengthens the project's economic fundamentals."

The 200-megawatt floating solar photovoltaic project at Chereh Dam is Masdar's first renewable energy project in Malaysia and is expected to be Southeast Asia's largest floating solar facility once operational.

The project is being developed by a consortium led by Masdar together with Citaglobal and Tiza Global Sdn Bhd, under a power purchase agreement with Tenaga Nasional.

Meanwhile, Masdar head of business development (Asia-Pacific) Fatima Al Suwaidi said Malaysia is a strategic growth market as the company expands its renewable energy portfolio in Southeast Asia.

"As we work towards our target of reaching 100 gigawatts of renewable capacity by 2030, we have identified several strong growth markets, including Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines," she said.

She added that Malaysia's openness to foreign investment, along with new regulations supporting renewable deployment and grid stability, were key considerations for long-term investments.

Fatima said floating solar is particularly attractive for land-scarce countries, including Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam.

"Land availability is often limited and, where land exists, it is usually prioritised for agriculture.

"Using existing water bodies such as dams allows dual use and is more environmentally responsible.

"Floating solar can also improve generation efficiency, as the proximity to water creates a cooling effect that enhances panel performance," she said.

She said that while Malaysia has hybrid floating and land-based solar projects, the Chereh Dam facility will be the first fully floating solar project of its kind in the country.

"This project will demonstrate Malaysia's capability to deliver large-scale renewable energy projects using innovative technologies such as floating solar," she said.

Fatima added that the Chereh Dam project marks the start of Masdar's long-term presence in Malaysia, with plans to deepen partnerships and expand its renewable energy footprint.

She also said Masdar plans to establish an office in Kuala Lumpur in the second half of the year. – Bernama