



15 AUG, 2022

'WASTE FLOWING INTO DAMS A MAJOR ISSUE'

New Straits Times, Malaysia



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TNB Power Generation Sdn Bhd chief operating officer Datuk Roslan Abd Rahman (second from left) joining members of the media on a tour of Susu Dam in Ulu Jelai, Cameron Highlands, recently. BERNAMA PIC

SEDIMENTATION

'WASTE FLOWING INTO DAMS A MAJOR ISSUE'

TNB Genco COO reveals company spends RM40 million a year to clear reservoirs

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SEDIMENTATION caused by waste disposal is among the biggest challenges faced by TNB Power Generation Sdn Bhd (TNB Genco) in ensuring its hydroelectric dams in the district here remain at optimum levels.

Chief operating officer Datuk Roslan Abd Rahman said TNB Genco, a subsidiary of Tenaga Nasional Bhd, spends an average of RM40 million annually to remove sediments from its reservoirs.

"While generating electricity, it is crucial to ensure the water flow is under control and at a safe level.

"However, our biggest challenge is sedimentation.

"Every year, we spend about RM40 million to remove the sediments, which comprise waste and sand, to ensure that the capacity of the dams is always at a

good level," he said during a tour of its power stations and hydro dams here recently.

Present was Cameron Highlands Power Stations general manager Sa'aidan Abu Hassan.

Roslan said the cost was likely to increase by 10 per cent annually.

"Although the amount for clean-up and maintenance is manageable, we want to reduce the cost as much as possible.

"To do this, we need to reduce the sediments and waste that are entering our reservoirs."

Roslan said when the dam began operations in 1963, its reservoir was at 100 per cent capacity.

"However, at present, the water-holding capacity has decreased to only half."

He said the reservoir level would drop to the minimum after only four hours.

"We cannot run the hydro dam for more than four hours daily."

Roslan added that other than sedimentation, TNB Genco also faced operational and maintenance challenges such as landslides, as well as agricultural and logging waste.

Roslan said TNB Genco has also been working with agencies and departments to address sedimentation and waste pollution.

"If we keep focusing on sedimentation at our reservoirs, it will be a never-ending story. We need to identify the root cause of

the problem.

"Therefore, we worked with the National Water Research Institute of Malaysia, where part of the programmes focus on educating people living near river areas and those involved in agriculture on how to properly dispose of waste, as well as 'Program Sayangi Sungai'.

"We have also installed sediment traps at dams, and identified river borders so that when people encroach on the area, the respective authorities will be aware of it."

He added that apart from generating renewable energy for the country, hydroelectric dams also serve as a flood mitigation system which prevents disasters from worsening, especially in downstream areas.

During the tour, media personnel were taken to the Sultan Yusuf Jor Power Station, Sultan Abu Bakar Dam, Susu Dam and Ulu Jelai Power Station.

The group was briefed on the operation of the power plants, as well as renewable energy generation.

TNB Genco has three hydropower stations in Malaysia, namely the Sungai Perak Hydro Power Station which produces 1,249MW (megawatts), Sultan Mahmud Kenyir Hydro Power Plant which generates 665MW, and Cameron Highlands Power Stations which produce 622MW.