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KOTA KINABALU: Electricity supply to Sabah's east coast is expected to be restored within 48 hours, said Sabah Electricity Sdn Bhd chief executive officer Datuk Mohd Yaakob Jaafar.

Flooding and landslides that struck the west coast of Sabah have also disrupted electricity supply to the east coast.

About 230,000 consumers in six districts — Sandakan, Lahad Datu, Kinabatangan, Kunak, Semporna and Beluran — were affected when the 275kV Kolopis-Segaliud line tripped at 5.05pm on Saturday.

The key transmission line, located in Penampang, supplies up to 260 megawatts daily to the east coast.

Yaakob said that following physical inspection and aerial surveillance, the utility company confirmed that one of the trans-

mission towers at Kampung Kampung Sarapung Kolopis in Penampang had collapsed.

The utility company will now use a "bypass" method to divert supply from other transmission lines to the east coast.

"Depending on the weather, we could restore electricity within two days. But this will involve load shedding or rotational rationing of supply. About 70,000 consumers are expected to be affected for this. After that, it will take eight days to instal two Energy Restoration Systems at the site temporarily before a permanent tower is built," he said at the Sabah Air Terminal here yesterday.

He added that the company had received over 3,000 complaints through its careline yesterday before issuing a statement

on the incident.

Despite the weather, Yaakob said Sabah Electricity mobilised its technical team to the sites.

"Heavy rain, muddy roads and fallen trees hampered operations. Some of our staff even had to hike into the forest, but fortunately nothing bad happened," he said, adding that the company also incurred losses of at least RM3 million from the collapsed tower.

Yaakob added that the company had been using advanced tools, such as Light Detection and Ranging and remote-sensing technology, and were working with geology experts to detect abnormalities that could threaten its assets.