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Tenom Pangi hydro plant to boost capacity from 66MW to 427MW

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Madius (right) reviews the operational flow at the Tenom Pangi Hydroelectric Power Station.

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Elton Gomes

TENOM: Sabah Electricity is committed to increasing the electricity generation capacity at the Tenom Pangi Hydroelectric Power Station (SJHTP) through collaborative efforts from all parties.

Its chairman, Datuk Seri Wilfred Madius Tangau, said the government – particularly Sabah Electricity – has plans to increase the station's capacity from 66MW to 427MW, following in-principle approval from the Sabah Energy Commission (ECoS).

"This upgrading effort is a key strategic step in ensuring the stability of electricity supply not only in Sabah but also in the Federal Territory of Labuan.

"It also aligns with our commitment at Sabah Electricity to strengthen the use of sustainable green energy and ensure a stable and resilient electricity supply for the well-being of the people," Madius said.

He made the remarks during the Re-Operation Ceremony and 40th Anniversary Celebration of the Tenom Pangi Hydroelectric Power Station on May 14.

The event was officiated by Deputy Chief Minister III and Minister of Works Datuk Shahelmey Yahya.

Madius emphasized that the initiative forms part of Sabah Electricity's long-term strategy to reduce dependence on fossil fuels. He also highlighted the importance of expanding renewable energy sources such as hydro, solar and biomass to promote sustainable and environmentally friendly energy development.

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>
> **Datuk Seri Wilfred Madius Tangau**

Addressing public concern, Madius clarified that the Tenom Pangi station is not the cause of recent flooding in Tenom, Beaufort and surrounding areas.

"For everyone's information, the Tenom Pangi Hydroelectric Power Station operates differently from conventional hydroelectric stations that use dams to store water.

"This station applies the Run-of-River Scheme concept, generating electricity through the natural flow of the river without involving large reservoirs or dams," he explained.

The station diverts river water through a special tunnel to power hydro turbines and then releases the same amount of water back into the river, ensuring minimal impact on river levels.

He added that although the Diversion Water Gate (DWG) structure at the station may resemble a dam, it is in fact a river flow control system.

"The DWG's primary function is to divert water for electricity generation. If river levels rise suddenly, Sabah Electricity opens the DWG to release excess water safely, thus preventing overflow and preserving the river ecosystem," he said.

Construction of the Tenom Pangi Hydroelectric Power Station began in 1978 and was completed in 1984 with the installation of its final turbine. Located across the Padas River, the station operates with three turbines of 22MW each, providing a total capacity of 66MW.

In October 2022, the station suffered major damage due to a landslide and mudslide, which severely impacted its civil structures and all three main turbines.

Sabah Electricity initiated phased repair work, successfully restoring the plant, which resumed operations in April 2025 – contributing once again to the stability of electricity supply in Sabah and Labuan.