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EV charging stations not compulsory in rural areas: Minister

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KUALA LUMPUR: Electric vehicle (EV) charging stations will not be made compulsory in rural and remote areas for now, with infrastructure limitations and high installation costs posing challenges to efforts to expand the nationwide network to 30,000 units by 2030.

Investment, Trade and Industry Deputy Minister Sim Tze Tzin said the government was encouraging charging point operators (CPOs) to invest in smaller towns and remote communities, but some locations required new electricity substations before charging facilities could be installed.

"We have not made it mandatory for them to install chargers in these areas. At this point, we are encouraging it because there are many issues," he said in the Dewan Rakyat yesterday.

He added that Tenaga Nasional Bhd (TNB) needed time to plan and construct substations, which involved substantial costs and assessments of local electricity demand.

"It cannot simply provide a substation the day after a request is made. Construction, planning and other preparations are required."

Sim was responding to a supplementary question from Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein (BN-Sembrong), who asked whether companies, particularly those receiving government incentives, could be required to install chargers in rural and remote areas.

He added that the government was targeting 30,000 public EV charging units nationwide by 2030 through private investment and cooperation with state governments, utility companies, local authorities and industry players.

As of Sept 30, 2026, Malaysia had 7,341 public charging units, comprising 4,992 alternating current (AC) chargers and 2,349 direct current (DC) fast chargers.

Sim said installations would be expanded beyond major urban centres, with deployment guided by local demand and the suitability of locations.

He also said along major highways, 148 DC fast chargers were already operating at rest and service areas, lay-bys and petrol stations, including along the North-South Expressway, West Coast Expressway and East Coast Expressway.

He added that the facilities were intended to ease range anxiety among EV users worried about running out of battery power before reaching their destinations or the next charging point.

Sim said 20 CPOs were actively developing charging infrastructure nationwide, describing EV adoption and the expansion of charging facilities as a "chicken-and-egg" situation.

He added that higher EV adoption would encourage further investment in charging infrastructure, while a wider charging network would support greater uptake.

He also said rural EV owners with suitable parking spaces and electricity supply could install private chargers at home to meet their daily charging needs. – *By* ***Kirtinee Ramesh***

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