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KUALA LUMPUR: Much like how weather forecasts help people plan their daily routines, from avoiding traffic congestion during heavy rain to organising weekend activities, artificial intelligence (AI) is increasingly being used in the energy sector to anticipate electricity demand and prepare power systems ahead of time.

For Tenaga Nasional Bhd (TNB), AI is becoming the driving force behind a smarter, safer and more efficient power grid as the utility provider navigates the growing complexity of modern electricity systems.

TNB chief digital and information officer Azlan Ahmad said AI for energy is essentially about giving the power grid "a brain and eyes" capable of predicting, optimising and protecting the system in real time.

"The traditional power supply system is like a manual car,

where the driver has to make every decision, change every gear and watch every gauge.

"However, today's power system has become far more complex, with thousands of increasing numbers of solar panels and electric vehicle (EV) chargers being connected to the grid every day. This makes it increasingly challenging for humans to manage the system efficiently in real time," he told Bernama during a recent interview at TNB headquarters here.

Azlan said AI now functions like "a weather forecaster for electricity", helping TNB anticipate changes in electricity demand and prepare the system earlier.

"AI also works like a smart GPS, finding the most efficient path for power to travel so that nothing is wasted," he said.

Beyond efficiency, he said, AI is also helping utilities strengthen

grid reliability and safety.

"It acts like a 24/7 security guard, capable of detecting early signs of faults in cables even before breakdowns occur," he added.

Azlan described the development of an "AI-ready grid" as a major shift in how electricity systems are managed, moving away from fixing problems only after they happen towards detecting risks earlier and responding faster.

He said AI is already being applied across TNB's operations, including through tools that identify tripping patterns to reduce disruptions, predictive maintenance systems for underground cables, and visual intelligence solutions to improve field quality and safety. — Bernama



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