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DPM: Let's have more biogas stations, especially for agriculture

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JERANTUT: The number of biogas stations, especially in the agricultural sector, should be increased to achieve the national goal of boosting renewable energy capacity to 31% by 2025, says Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi.

He said renewable energy not only reduces the country's dependence on fossil fuels but also helps reduce the government's burden in the distribution of electricity subsidies.

He added that the cost borne by the government in terms of elec-

tricity subsidies was very high as it was given to all groups equally. Because of that, targeted subsidies were introduced, he said.

"Now the target groups, the B40 and M40 groups, are given priority to enjoy (electricity subsidies).

"With the availability of renewable energy (RE) biogas facilities as we see today ... the cost borne by the government will be reduced.

"We want the subsidies to be used for development, including the development of infrastructure which is still weak, especially

in this area," he said at the launch of the 5.5MW biogas power plant by Felcra Japutra Sdn Bhd and Cenergi SEA Bhd here yesterday.

It was also attended by Pahang Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Wan Rosdy Wan Ismail.

Ahmad Zahid, who is also Rural and Regional Development Minister, said to realise the goal to expand the use of RE, he wants nine Felcra Bhd mills across the country to set up biogas station facilities.

"I will meet with Felda to discuss having the same factories in

all settlements. This is in the interest of the country.

"This (also) is in line with the aspiration of the Prime Minister (Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim).

"Looking ahead, our dependence on natural resources should be reduced in phases by using energy from new sources," he said, Bernama reported.

Ahmad Zahid said that the potential of RE is huge, and because of that, he expects more government-owned companies to collaborate with the private sector to help in improving

the country's economic growth, especially in industries such as biogas.

The largest palm oil mill effluent biogas power plant project in Malaysia, with a capacity of 5.5MW, at the Felcra Jayaputra palm oil mill here, which started full operations on April 11, is capable of supplying electricity to nearly 14,000 homes or about 70,000 rural residents.

It is the largest grid-connected biogas power plant in the country, recognised by the Malaysia Book of Records.