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BY HAILEY CHUNG
theedgemarkets.com

KUALA LUMPUR (March 20): Malaysia's current renewable energy (RE) capacity level is at 25%, inching closer to the country's target of 31% RE share in the national installed capacity mix by 2025, said Natural Resources, Environment and Climate Change Minister Nik Nazmi Nik Ahmad.

He said the ministry is intensifying efforts to prepare a net energy metering (NEM) programme for the government sector to join in the RE initiative as there are many public buildings such as hospitals, schools, and universities.

He added that the ministry is exploring following Australia's example in solar energy usage.

"All this time, when we talk about solar [energy], we think about large-scale solar and taking a large land or pond to put solar panels. But Australia, for example, is the

most successful country in the use of the solar sector, rooftop solar has already surpassed large-scale solar as an energy source.

"This is one of the easiest things for us to pay attention to, to speed up our energy transition," Nik Nazmi said during the question-and-answer session in Parliament on Monday (March 20).

On the government's plan to review the RE export ban, he said that if the policy is changed, it must be done on Malaysia's terms and to protect the interests of the country.

He added that the electricity tariff in the industrial and commercial sectors that uses high- and medium-voltage supply is still subsidised.

That is one of the constraints on the growth of the country's RE sector as it cannot sell generated energy at a commercial price, in comparison with Singapore which sells power at market price.

"There are many who want to use the latest technology to overcome constraints. For example, solar energy which only takes four hours, (and at) the peak time can generate effective energy.

"Now, there are storage batteries but the cost is expensive. If it is made using the domestic tariff, it is still not attractive. So this matter needs to be studied," Nik Nazmi said.

He said the government is reviewing the RE export ban, currently in place, after receiving several requests including from Sarawak.