



27 OCT, 2026

Govt to decide on nuclear power plant after four key studies, says minister



The Edge CEO Morning Brief, Malaysia

KUALA LUMPUR (Oct 26): The government will decide on the direction, technology and development of a national nuclear power plant only after four key studies are completed within the next 12 months, with small modular reactors (SMRs) among the options being considered.

Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation Datuk Chang Lih Kang said the four studies are underway under a nuclear energy technology development programme for electricity generation overseen by the Ministry of Energy Transition and Water Transformation.

“Regarding the selection of technology, there are various options, such as land-based SMRs, floating SMRs and others. We will take into account the suitability, requirements and specific circumstances of the country.

“Any decisions concerning technology, timelines and the construction of a nuclear power plant will only be made once these studies are concluded,” he said when winding up the debate on the Supply Bill 2027 (Budget 2027) at the policy stage for his ministry in the Dewan Rakyat on Monday.

The four studies cover the owner-operator model and financing plans, site as-

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Bernama

assessment and prioritisation, technology evaluation, and the road map for industrial development.

On public perception of nuclear energy, particularly concerns over safety, Chang said nuclear energy is no longer a taboo subject for the government, although public acceptance remains a critical factor in determining whether the project could proceed.

“The prime minister himself has touched upon this in the budget. Nevertheless, public opinion remains a priority, as sufficient awareness and advocacy are essential.

“If the public cannot accept this proposal, it would be difficult to proceed with such a project,” he said.

To improve public understanding, Chang said the ministry had introduced a nuclear advocacy component at the 2026 National Science Week Carnival, focusing on hands-on learning and engagement based on scientific facts.

On the regulatory framework, he said Malaysia’s nuclear regulatory regime now meets International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) standards following amendments to the Atomic Energy Licensing Act 1984 (Act 304), which came into force on Dec 1, 2025.

“These amendments signify a comprehensive transformation of the nation’s nuclear and radiation regulatory regime. They ensure full compliance with international standards set by the IAEA across all areas, encompassing safety, security and safeguards under the ‘3S’ framework,” he said.

Earlier, Chang said the ministry had received an allocation of RM1.29 billion under Budget 2027 to support the Madani Economy framework and the 13th Malaysia Plan.