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TNB rate hike continues to get attention of MPs

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THE increase in the electricity rates announced on Monday continued to get the attention of MPs.

Nga Kor Ming (DAP-Taiping) said that instead of increasing the rates, the government should look at utilising the excess power being produced in the country.

At present, the excess power being produced stood at 52 per cent, he told reporters at the Parliament lobby.

He said all this power could not be stored and just went to waste.

"By using up this excess pow-

er there will not be a need to increase power rates," he said.

Nga said the excess power in Japan stood at 10 per cent, the United States five per cent and China 15 per cent.

He said Tenaga Nasional Bhd (TNB) was already making over RM1 billion and there was no reason for it to increase the rates.

Nga said the government must also come clean on the contracts signed with the Independent Power Producers (IPPs).

He said these Independent Power Producers were being subsidised to a tune of RM18 billion a year.

Backbenchers Club chairman and Johor Baru MP Datuk

Shahrir Samad said TNB needed to raise the tariffs as it had to invest in new technology and plants.

He said the government was also protecting the poor by increasing the band to 300 kWh.

"The government needs to look at how they can help the small and medium industries, especially those running coffee shops, bookshops and other small shops," he said.

Shahrir said these groups had small margins of profit and they might have to pass on the cost to consumers.

He also said the government must find ways to reduce the hardship faced by these SMEs.