

KERATAN AKHBAR

TARIKH : 29 OGOS 2023
AKHBAR : THE EDGE
PAUTAN : <https://theedgemalaysia.com/node/680568>

Nuclear still on the cards in Malaysia's energy transition



(From left) Moderator Freda Liu, Economy Minister Mohd Rafizi Ramli, Natural Resources, Energy and Climate Change Minister Nik Nazmi Nik Ahmad, and Energy Commission chairman Mohammed Rashdan Mohd Yusof. (Photo by Sam Fong/The Edge)

KUALA LUMPUR (Aug 29): The government has not ruled out the use of nuclear energy to achieve Malaysia's energy transition targets, according to Minister of Economy Rafizi Ramli, as well as Natural Resources, Energy and Climate Change Minister Nik Nazmi Nik Ahmad.

When asked whether nuclear energy has a role in Malaysia's energy transition plans during a session at the Energy Transition Conference on Tuesday (Aug 29), Rafizi replied in the affirmative, adding that he thinks nuclear energy will be a part of the nation's plan in time.

“The policy structure of the government is such that we go on a five-year plan. Of course, we look at planning and the numbers as we go along, but usually, any major pivots especially on something like nuclear is something that we have to bring throughout the whole government,” he said.

“But I can say with clarity that I don’t think we can be choosy [when it comes to clean energy generation] and I prefer to be agnostic, so long as it meets all our stringent demands and requirements.

“For us to manage the energy trilemma — affordability, security and sustainability — I don’t think we have the leisure to rule out anything,” he added.

Rafizi noted that he and Nik Nazmi are still working on the possibility of implementing nuclear energy into Malaysia’s energy transition plans at the policy level, and noted that these kinds of deliberations eventually go to the National Energy Council, which is chaired by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

“I can share that all the macro energy planning is done at my ministry (Ministry of Economy), and that we are not ruling it (nuclear energy) out. Yes, it is on the cards but there’s a lot of things we really have to [be] careful [of] when we start working on it,” he added.

Nik Nazmi chimed that while it is not a “greenlight” for nuclear energy, he described it as “amber” — in consideration.

“Because it has zero carbon emissions, but obviously, there are security and safety concerns from the public. We totally accept that.

“But with changing technology, like the SMR (small modular reactor), it is something that we cannot rule out entirely,” he added.

Nik Nazmi lamented the policy decision made back in 2018, then under former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad’s administration, to reject the use of nuclear power plants to generate energy.

“For many many years, we had really good research institutions with regard to nuclear, however, it came to a point in 2018 when everything (was closed down, or most of it was closed down. I think that is truly unfortunate.

“Because if we know anything about nuclear, the moment you say ‘yes’ (you want it), it will take many many years for it to come to fruition, and you need that expertise and skillset. But when we made that decision (in 2018), we lost it,” he added.