

Malaysia may go for nuke energy

One nation after another.

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Malaysia may explore the use of nuclear technology for power if the oil price shoots up to US\$100 (RM370) a barrel.

Science, Technology and Innovation Minister Datuk Seri Dr Jamaluddin Jarjis said the country need not venture into nuclear technology at present to generate power.

“However, the world is changing. Who would have thought oil could hit US\$70 (RM259) a barrel?,” he told reporters at the 4th Informal Asean Ministerial Meeting on Science and Technology here yesterday.

“There is even the possibility the price could shoot up to US\$100 a barrel. When that happens, Tenaga Nasional Bhd will have no choice but to increase its tariff or go bankrupt.”

It would be a matter of national interest and economic survival for the country’s power utility company at that time, he said when asked about Japan being invited to share its experiences in managing nuclear energy.

He said Malaysia wanted to know how Japan, where two major cities – Hiroshima and Nagasaki – were destroyed by atomic bombs during World War II, could convince its people to go along with the use of nuclear technology to generate power and how they build the plants.

Dr Jamaluddin said it would be an issue of economic survival if oil price continued to rise.

“Investors may run away because their products will become too expensive to be made in Malaysia if the cost to generate electricity increases,” he said, adding that the Government wanted to be prepared for the situation in the future.

“We will not be able to draw new investors as well.”

He said some European countries were already moving towards using nuclear technology with the latest being Britain.

Closer to home, Vietnam also has plans to switch to nuclear technology to generate power, he noted.

“We have more than 60 nuclear scientists and we want Japan to share with us their experience,” he added.