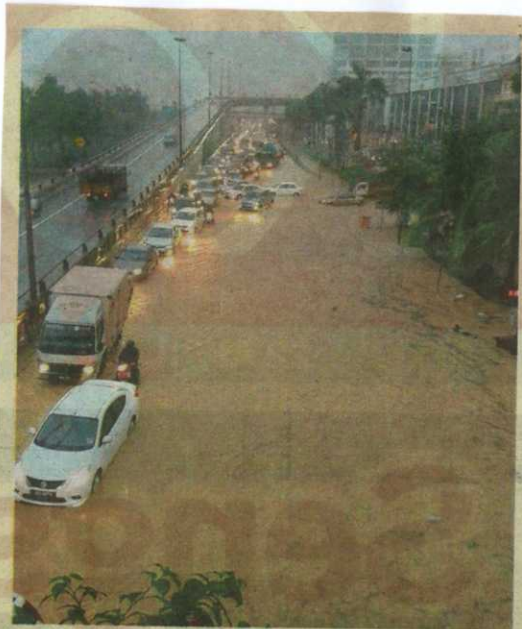


**KERATAN AKHBAR-AKHBAR TEMPATAN
TARIKH: 22 APRIL 2014 (SELASA)**

| Bil | Tajuk | Akhbar |
|------------|---|-----------------------|
| 1 | Serdang dilanda banjir kilat | Kosmo |
| 2 | Heavy rain uproots trees and cause flash floods in several areas | The Star |
| 3 | Biotech draw at ECER | New Straits Times |
| 4 | BiotechCorp lancar jenama Bioekonomi Malaysia | Kosmo |
| 5 | Expert sheds light | The Star |
| 6 | 'Local firms vulnerable to cyber attacks' | New Straits Times |
| 7 | Rafizi questions ministry's RM100m R&D grant | The Malay Mail |
| 8 | RM100m 'R&D' grant for commercial ops questionable, PKR MP argues | Malay Mail Online |
| 9 | Rafizi: PM interfered in RM100mil R&D grant | Free Malaysia Today |
| 10 | PKR questions if Najib interfered in RM100 million grant company | The Malaysian Insider |
| 11 | PKR: Gov't must explain RM100mil non-R&D grant | Malaysia Kini |

**KERATAN AKHBAR TEMPATAN
KOSMO (NEGARA) : MUKA SURAT 2
TARIKH: 22 APRIL 2014 (SELASA)**



SEBAHAGIAN laluan di Lebuhraya Besraya berhampiran Stesen KTM Serdang dinaiki air lewat petang semalam.

Serdang dilanda banjir kilat

SERDANG - Ketika krisis air sedang melanda di beberapa daerah negeri Selangor sehingga memaksa catuan bekalan air, lain pula yang terjadi di Serdang apabila hujan lebat menyebabkan beberapa kawasan mengalami banjir kilat semalam.

Hujan lebat di kawasan tersebut kira-kira pukul 5.50 petang telah menyebabkan paras air naik kira-kira setengah meter di kawasan Sekolah Rendah Kebangsaan Seri Serdang serta Lebuhraya Besraya berhadapan Stesen Komuter Serdang.

Penolong Pengarah Operasi Jabatan Bomba dan Penyelamat Selangor, Mohd. Sani Harul berkata, ekoran banjir kilat itu berlaku kesesakan lalu lintas di kawasan Lebuhraya Besraya dan Seri Kembangan.

Sementara itu, Pengarah Jabatan Meteorologi Malaysia, Datuk Che Gayah Ismail berkata, cuaca hujan yang dialami ketika ini dijangka berterusan sehingga pertengahan Mei sebelum tiba Monsun Barat Daya atau musim kering yang bakal melanda kawasan Semenanjung Malaysia hingga September ini.

KERATAN AKHBAR
THE STAR (NATION) : MUKA SURAT 6
TARIKH : 22 APRIL 2014 (SELASA)

Heavy rain uproots trees and causes flash floods in several areas

By NICHOLAS CHENG
and P. ARUNA

newsdesk@thestar.com.my

PETALING JAYA: A heavy evening downpour accompanied by strong winds wreaked havoc here and around the Kuala Lumpur city centre yesterday, uprooting trees and leaving flash floods in its wake.

The downpour came as the Meteorological Department warned of heavy rain and thunderstorms almost every day until early May, even as the possibility of extended water rationing looms in the state and many parts of the city.

Yesterday's downpour started around 4.45pm and caused flash floods at the Dato Onn roundabout in Jalan Kinabalu, the Sungai Besi toll headed towards UPM, the Serdang KTM station and the Sprint Highway near the Section 16 Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) station construction works.

Near Menara Star in Section 16, MRT workers were seen walking knee-deep in flood waters, pushing a stalled car through traffic at the highway underpass.



Bumper-to-bumper: The massive jam at Sungai Besi after the heavy rain.

At the Besraya Highway, three lanes merged into one at the road near the Serdang KTM station as motorists manoeuvred through muddy flood waters.

Meteorological Department central forecasting office director Muhammad Helmi Abdullah said the pattern of almost daily rain was expected during the current intermonsoon season.

"We can expect thunderstorms and heavy downpour as well as

strong wind gusts, especially in low-lying areas.

"Urban areas are more prone to flash floods during this period and so we are likely to see heavy traffic jams almost daily," he said when contacted yesterday.

He said lightning would occur frequently, advising Malaysians to try to stay indoors from late afternoon till early night.

This weather pattern, he said, was seen in the east coast and inner west

coast of the peninsula as well as in Sabah and Sarawak.

"We are hoping that the rain will fall in the areas near the dams in Selangor to help increase the water levels," he added.

Yesterday evening saw traffic slow moving in most major roads in the city centre, with Malaysian Highway Authority officials reporting traffic to be at a standstill on both sides along Jalan Hang Tuah.

Traffic from Bandar Sunway heading towards the Kewajipan roundabout in Subang Jaya was also at a standstill.

Traffic from MRR2 from Bukit Jalil heading towards the city centre, Subang to Dataran Prima and Kota Damansara as well as on the Kerinchi Link towards the Federal Highway was also slow moving, while officials reported of a crawl from Bandar Utama to Taman Tun Dr Ismail and from Kelana Jaya to SS2.

In Taman Tun Dr Ismail, Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) and Fire and Rescue Department officers reported four fallen trees as a result of the strong winds.

Biotech draw at ECER

PLENTIFUL OPPORTUNITIES: Projects seen generating RM5b worth of investments

MARTIZA ALI

KUANTAN

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BIOECONOMY projects are expected to generate more than RM5 billion worth of investments in the East Coast Economic Region (ECER) with several multinational companies having already agreed to set up their manufacturing facilities in the area.

Malaysian Biotechnology Corporation Sdn Bhd (BiotechCorp) chief executive officer Datuk Dr Mohd Nazlee Kamal said several multinational companies had agreed to have their operations in the ECER, taking advantage of the raw materials that are already in place.

With its abundant resources and infrastructure support, he said ECER could emerge as the key centre for bio-based economy, adding that it is also ideally positioned to reap benefits from the sector.

Among the key investments, he said, was the joint venture between CJ CheilJedang Corp of South Korea and French company Arkema S.A, which will invest RM2 billion to produce fermentation-based L-methionine that is used in animal feed.

Another main investor is Gevo Inc from United States, with approved investment of RM1.96 billion, which will set up the world's first bio-isobutanol plant using biomass at the Kertih Biopolymer Park.

Nazlee said the introduction of such high-impact projects would also benefit the people through their involvement in value-added activities that provided higher income and job opportunities.

"The successful adoption of biotechnology into core economic activities will have both direct and



Science, Technology and Innovation Ministry deputy secretary-general (policy) **Datuk Dr Mohd Azhar Yahaya** (left) and BiotechCorp chief executive **Datuk Dr Mohd Nazlee Kamal** (second from left) browsing through some of the products at a Bioeconomy Transformation booth in Kuantan, yesterday. Pic by Ainal Marhaton Abd Ghani

ripple effects to the economy," he said after the opening of a two-day Bioeconomy Transformation Programme workshop, here, yesterday.

BiotechCorp would also introduce a special branding for Malaysian bioeconomy products that were produced by companies with the BioNexus-status — a special status awarded to qualified international and Malaysian biotechnology companies that entitles them to fiscal incentives, grants and other guarantees to assist growth.

To date, he said 81 BioNexus-

status companies had benefited from the financial stimulus provided under the Biotechnology Commercialisation Grant (BCG).

"The BCG recipients are able to attract additional investments of more than RM1 billion and generate income totalling RM349 million," he said.

As the key economic developer for the country's bio-based sector, he said BiotechCorp was committed to implementing strategies crucial to the industry's growth.

Earlier, when opening the workshop, Science, Technology and In-

novation Ministry deputy secretary-general (policy) Datuk Dr Mohd Azhar Yahaya said bioeconomy in Malaysia is currently worth more than RM14.6 billion and has created more than 83,000 new jobs.

He said the fast development of the biotech industry in the east coast had also spurred the growth of biotechnology centres in ECER, such as the Kertih Biopolymer Park, Kuantan Integrated Park, Gambang Halal Park and the Malaysia-China Kuantan Industrial Park.

BiotechCorp lancar jenama Bioekonomi Malaysia

KUANTAN - Malaysian Biotechnology Corporation (BiotechCorp) bakal melancarkan jenama Bioekonomi Malaysia pada bulan Mei depan bertujuan mengetengahkan produk-produk bioekonomi keluaran syarikat tempatan di pasaran.

Ketua Pegawai Eksekutifnya, Datuk Dr. Mohd. Nazlee Kamal

berkata, jenama tersebut adalah eksklusif untuk 230 buah syarikat bionexus di seluruh negara.

Jelasnya, produk keluaran syarikat bionexus akan diberikan satu tanda khas yang mengiktiraf kualiti produk, memudahkannya dikenali pelanggan dan membantu pemasaran di pasar-pasar besar serta farmasi.



MOHD. NAZLEE

“Apabila jenama ini sudah dikenali dan mendapat permintaan dalam kalangan pengguna tempatan, kami bercadang akan memperluaskan penggunaannya sehingga ke pasaran luar negara,” katanya kepada pemberita sempena Bengkel Program Transformasi Bioekonomi (BTP) di sini semalam.

Bengkel tersebut merupakan siri keenam daripada tujuh siri yang dijalankan di seluruh negara, bertujuan untuk mengenalpasti projek-projek yang boleh dimasukkan dalam program BTP.

Lebih 100 orang peserta hadir dalam bengkel tersebut yang terdiri daripada wakil syarikat swasta, ins-

titusi akademik dan agensi sokongan seperti Lembaga Minyak Sawit Malaysia.

Menurut Mohd. Nazlee, industri bioekonomi negara kini bernilai lebih daripada RM14.6 bilion dan telah mencipta sebanyak 83,000 peluang pekerjaan.

Bagaimanapun katanya, masih terdapat banyak ruang untuk penambahbaikan dalam industri, terutamanya dalam sektor makanan tambahan yang mana industri suplemen diet global dijangka meningkat kepada AS\$107 bilion (RM347 bilion) pada tahun 2017.

“Malaysia sebagai sebuah negara tropika mampu menghasilkan banyak bahan herba seperti misai kucing, kacip fatimah, halia bara dan tongkat ali yang diperlukan dalam industri.

“Ketika saya ke Perancis baru-baru ini, sudah terdapat produk berasaskan misai kucing dijual di farmasi,

namun ia adalah keluaran syarikat luar.

“Malaysia tidak sepatutnya hanya mengeksport bahan mentah, tetapi mengeluarkan produk akhir yang dapat merangsang penubuhan pelbagai industri sampingan, seperti industri pembungkusan, membuat botol dan kapsul untuk memberikan efek lebih besar kepada ekonomi,” katanya.

Mohd. Nazlee menjelaskan, BiotechCorp telah melancarkan Program Pembangunan Komuniti Bioekonomi bagi meningkatkan kerjasama antara syarikat bionexus dengan petani menerusi pembekalan herba secara kontrak,” katanya.

“Projek penanaman secara kontrak ini akan dimulakan di Parit Raja, Terengganu dan Raub, Pahang dengan penanaman pelbagai tumbuhan herba untuk kegunaan industri,” katanya.

Expert sheds light

In conjunction with Earth Day today, we take a look at the issue of light pollution in the urban areas of Klang Valley

By VIJENTHI NAIR
vijenthi@thestar.com.my



AWARENESS on light pollution takes centre stage on the last Saturday in March every year, when hundreds of cities worldwide observe Earth Hour.

Chances are, all the non-essential lights which were switched off are turned back on after the hour, and the pollution continues.

The same happens in Kuala Lumpur.

Light pollution happens when artificial lights are used wrongly and excessively.

National Space Agency (Angkasa) science officer Jong Tze Kian explained during a briefing in conjunction with the Earth Hour celebration at the Ampang Jaya Municipal Council (MPAJ) that streetlights were the major contributors.

"Besides that, lights at home, on billboards, buildings and vehicles also contribute to light pollution.

"Although it is not as harmful or hazardous as other kinds of pollution, it has a negative impact on the environment and general health of living beings," he said, adding that it also hampers astronomers' research activities.

Jong said there were four types of light pollution, which were:

- Urban sky glow – excessive



Too bright: Back-to-back digital billboards along the Jalan Sultan Ismail and Jalan Bukit Bintang junction make the area very bright even at night.

lights reflected to the sky in residential and urban areas;

- Light trespass – lights shining in inappropriate places;
- Glare – Lights that are too bright; and
- Light Clutter – Too many bright lights in one place.

Take a drive into the city or look out from a high building at night

and one will notice that the sky is not very dark, even in the absence of the moon.

The colourful lights along Jalan Sultan Ismail are vibrant and lively, reaching a climax at the Jalan Bukit Bintang junction. There are just too many light sources – billboards, digital advertising, lights from buildings, decorative lights and street

lights – that the skies above are bright.

Similar situations can be found in other tourist sites, like Central Market, and Brickfields.

Some of the streetlights have more than one bulb each, some with up to four bulbs, like those found along Jalan Tun Tan Cheng Lock. The street lights in the middle of the road there have four light bulbs each. Although not all the bulbs work, the area is still very bright.

Many streetlights sport conical covers but this was not very effective as the bulbs bulged out from the covers below, throwing the light upwards. Similar types of streetlights were spotted in Brickfields, Central Market and Jalan Perdana.

Jong quoted the International Dark-Sky Association (IDA), which said that light pollution affected human health and wildlife while compromising safety and being a waste of energy.

"Even astronomers and stargazers are finding it hard to research here in Kuala Lumpur.

"Our observatory in Langkawi is also underutilised because development there is growing very fast and the light pollution grows with it," he said.

Stargazing enthusiast Wan Ahnad Daknam said photographs of the beautiful stars in the night sky will never come out right in this light-polluted city.

> SEE NEXT PAGE

KERATAN AKHBAR
THE STAR (METRO) : MUKA SURAT 3
TARIKH : 22 APRIL 2014 (SELASA)



Easiest form of pollution to overcome

► FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

"Being in a tropical country, there are many tiny water particles in the air. Every time a photo is taken, the water particles reflect light and this is captured by the camera sensors. The photos will be interrupted.

"That is why we need to go to the outskirts where light pollution is minimal, to get a good shot.

"In the peninsula, the best place to go would be to Tasoh Lake in Perlis and Janda Baik in Pahang," he said, adding that a beautiful starry night sky was almost impossible to see in the Klang Valley cities.

"We can only gauge the position of the Milky Way, which should be visible in the sky during this period. Since the Milky Way is at the tail end of the constellation of stars known as Scorpius, we know it is there although we cannot see it," he said.

Sabah Stargazers central committee member, Harris Jeffrey Harun, said the closest place to Kuala Lumpur for stargazing was in Sekinchan.

"Janda Baik is okay but due to its proximity to Genting Highlands, you have to move further away. Other options in the peninsula would be the Belum forest, and for Johorians, there are Batu Pahat and

Mersing," he said.

Solution

The good news is that, light pollution is one of the easiest forms of pollution to overcome.

Jong explained how minor adjustments could improve the situation.

"By fixing proper covers above the lights to focus the projection on the intended area, will help. Low-wattage bulbs will suffice and this will also save energy.

"Brighter does not mean safer, as it can cause glare. So use the appropriate brightness with devices like dimmer switches.

"It is also best to invest in compact fluorescent lights or LEDs instead of incandescent light, which uses more electricity and wastes more heat," he added.

1 A scene that is almost impossible to capture in the peninsula – the jetty and Milky Way shot in Kg Jangkai, Kuala Penyu, Sabah.
– Photo by HARRIS JEFFREY

2 The conical covers of streetlights on several streets in Kuala Lumpur such as these in Brickfields are not fully effective in preventing light from shining upwards due to the bulb bulging out from below.
– Photos by RICKY LAI

Street light



Negative effects of light pollution

- Disrupts the circadian rhythms (physical, mental and behavioral changes that follow a roughly 24-hour cycle, responding primarily to light and darkness) which can cause insomnia, cancer, depression, cardiovascular diseases and other effects of sleep disorders.

- Decrease in population due to food problem (eg. nocturnal animals having poor eyesight and weak preys easily noticed).
- Animal disoriented (eg. migrating birds veering off course and newborn turtles crawling inland than into the sea).

- Increase in cost and carbon footprint.

- Glare causes poor visibility and dangerous for motorists.
- Very bright lights can cause the area outside to become invisible and a perfect hideout of intruders.

Source: Angkasa, International Dark-Sky Association

©The Star Graphics

'Local firms vulnerable to cyber attacks'

LIDIANA ROSLI

KUALA LUMPUR: The risk of cyber attacks will heighten as Malaysia progresses towards becoming a developed nation as more devices will be connected to the Internet, says global information expert Symantec Corporation.

It said Malaysia's mediocre cyber protection enforcement would not shield the country and its businesses from what was to come.

Symantec's Internet Security Threat Report Volume 19, launched yesterday, revealed that targeted cyber-attacks globally rose by 91 per cent last year from 2012, while Malaysia's position in cyber vulnerability dropped slightly from 35th to 33rd among 157 countries.

"Malaysia is vulnerable from these attacks because of the relatively high numbers of connected devices. As it progresses towards its goal of becoming an advanced nation by 2020, there will be more devices being connected to the Internet and, thus, more potential for cyber-attacks," said Nigel Tan, director of systems engineering at Symantec Corporation (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd.

The survey found that Malaysian businesses are vulnerable to malicious codes, spam, phishing hosts, bots, network attacks and Internet (web) attacks.

Industries that are the most vulnerable are healthcare and transportation, which appeared in the top three of threat vulnerability for spam, phishing and malware.

Tan said transport and healthcare in Malaysia had traditionally been less regulated in comparison to the financial industry, which is heavily regulated.

"These two industries are very vulnerable in terms of identity theft, where criminals could harvest patients' and clients' identities and trade them in the underground economy. The more complete the information, the more they can make of it," he added.

According to Symantec, the country's small and medium enterprises are especially vulnerable to these threats as they lack the funding for proper investments in security. Their small size, with as few as 250 employees, also makes data mining for criminals easier.

Individuals with the highest risk of being cyber victimised are those who work in the media industry or as personal assistants as criminals view them as the gateway to even more valuable information.

Symantec recommends that businesses know their data better and take greater steps in protecting it, educating employees and implementing strong security posture. Individuals, meanwhile, need to educate themselves to become savvy and be more vigilant.

Symantec Singapore Pte Ltd vice-president (Asia South Region) Eric Hoh said Malaysia was headed in the right direction, especially with the Personal Data Protection Act, but businesses and individuals themselves needed to be more savvy.

KERATAN AKHBAR
THE MALAY MAIL (NEWS) : MUKA SURAT 18
TARIKH: 22 APRIL 2014 (SELASA)

Rafizi questions ministry's RM100m R&D grant

KUALA LUMPUR — A non-repayable RM100 million "research and development" grant for a firm's commercial project has come under fire from PKR's Pandan MP Rafizi Ramli who alleged abuse of taxpayers' funds in the federal scheme.

In the second of his promised series of exposes on the issue, Rafizi disclosed a letter purportedly from the Science, Technology and Industry Minister dated January 21 approving the sum to NSE Resources Corporation (M) Sdn Bhd to set up a steam plant using "sustainable woodchip biomass".

"This will be a very slippery precedent for the government. If you give a RM100 million grant for one project by one company, does that mean the same facility will be extended to other companies that work on high-end technology?"

"You cannot allow one grant to one company but not allow other companies the same access to such funding," *Malay Mail Online* reported him as saying.

The first-term MP argued that over the four years since the government set up the R&D fund now worth over RM1.15 billion, the ministry had never given out a grant as big as that for NSE Resources.

The largest grant prior to this was RM2 million under the technology acquisition fund, he added.

Rafizi stressed that Malaysia's research community has long struggled to secure funding for their work, claiming that everyone from universities to research groups had had to jump through hoops of fire just to secure a fraction of the grant allegedly approved for NSE Resources.

"I would like to see the reaction of the R&D community. I think they'd be quite

upset because they have to go through such a rigorous process only to get a grant worth between RM500,000 and RM700,000.

"The disparity between what they (R&D community) have to go through and the amount available to them, compared to this amount, is astounding," he said, adding that the government should disclose to Parliament the list of recipients of grants under the R&D fund.

Rafizi questioned the role of the prime minister's office in approving the said ministry's research grants, after the approval letter to NSE Resources made reference to one from the office.

The letter did not detail the contents of the letter from the prime minister's office other than to state its reference and November 21, 2013 date.

Rafizi insisted he had "full information"

regarding the project — from its total value to where it would be built — but declined to divulge more until Putrajaya explains its position on the matter.

When contacted by *Malay Mail Online*, an employee with the Bentong, Pahang-based firm said no representative authorised to comment was available.

On Sunday, the ministry denied an earlier allegation by Rafizi of abuse in the allocation of the RM1.15 billion in research grants.

Deputy Minister Datuk Dr Abu Bakar Mohamad Diah said the ministry adhered to a tight procedure that included expert and professional evaluation of applications before any application is approved.

Rafizi had claimed the RM1.15 billion spent between 2009 and 2013 was not commensurate with the results, resulting in just 20 products commercialised.

**BERITA ONLINE
THE MALAY MAIL ONLINE**

<http://www.themalaymailonline.com/malaysia/article/rm100m-rd-grant-for-commercial-ops-questionable-pkr-mp-argues>

TARIKH: 22 APRIL 2014 (SELASA)

malaymailonline

RM100m 'R&D' grant for commercial ops questionable, PKR MP argues

BY JOSEPH SIPALAN

APRIL 21, 2014

UPDATED: APR 21, 2014 06:22 PM



Rafizi Ramli giving a speech at the Reformasi 2.0 ceramah in Lembah Pantai, April 20, 2014. Today Rafizi insisted that he has 'full information' regarding the MOSTI project.— Picture by Choo Choy May

PETALING JAYA, April 21 — A non-repayable RM100 million “research and development” grant for a firm’s commercial project today came under fire from an opposition lawmaker alleging abuse of taxpayers’ funds in the federal scheme.

In the second of his promised series of exposes on the issue, PKR’s Pandan MP Rafizi Ramli disclosed a letter purportedly from the Ministry of Science, Technology and Industry (MOSTI) dated January 21 approving the sum to NSE Resources Corporation (M) Sdn Bhd to set up a steam plant using “sustainable woodchip biomass”.

“This will be a very slippery precedent for the government. If you give a RM100 million grant for one project by one company, does that mean the same facility will be extended to other companies that work on high-end technology?”

“You cannot allow one grant to one company but not allow other companies the same access to such funding,” he said.

The first-term MP argued that over the four years since the government set up the R&D fund now worth over RM1.15 billion, the ministry had never given out grants the size allegedly approved for NSE Resources.

Prior to the alleged approval of the RM100 million payout, the largest grant issued amounted to RM2 million under the technology acquisition fund, he added.

Rafizi stressed that Malaysia's research community has long struggled to secure funding for their work, claiming that everyone from universities to research groups have had to jump through hoops of fire just to secure a fraction of the grant allegedly approved for NSE Resources.

"I would like to see the reaction of the R&D community. I think they'd be quite upset because they have to go through such a rigorous process only to get a grant worth between RM500,000 and RM700,000.

"The disparity between what they (R&D community) have to go through and the amount available to them, compared to this amount, is astounding," he said, adding that there the government should disclose to Parliament the list of recipients of grants under the R&D fund.

Rafizi then questioned the role of the Prime Minister's Office in the approval of MOSTI's research grants, after the approval letter to NSE made reference to one from Datuk Seri Najib Razak's office.

The letter did not detail the contents of the letter from the PMO other than to state its reference and November 21, 2013 date.

Rafizi insisted that he has "full information" regarding the project —from its total value to where it will be built — but declined to divulge more until Putrajaya explains its position on the matter.

When contacted by *The Malay Mail Online*, an employee with the Bentong, Pahang-based firm said no representative authorised to comment was available.

Yesterday, MOSTI denied an earlier allegation by Rafizi of abuse in the allocation of the RM1.15 billion in research grants.

Deputy Minister Datuk Dr Abu Bakar Mohamad Diah said the ministry adheres to a tight procedure that includes expert and professional evaluation of applications before any application is approved.

Rafizi had claimed the RM1.152 billion spent between 2009 and 2013 was not commensurate with the results, resulting in just 20 products commercialised.



Rafizi: PM interfered in RM100mil R&D grant

Alyaa Azhar
| April 21, 2014

The grant given to a private firm involves public funds, says PKR strategy director.

UPDATED



PETALING JAYA: PKR strategy director Rafizi Ramli today alleged that the Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak was instrumental in awarding a RM100 million research and development grant to a private company.

The grant, available under the Science, Technology and Innovation Ministry (Mosti), was awarded to the private firm, NSE Resources Corporation (M) Sdn Bhd, he claimed.

Speaking at the press conference, he released a letter dated Jan 21, 2014 signed by the Mosti minister Ewon Ebin to the company, which granted the fund to the firm.

The letter referred to another letter from the Prime Minister's Department dated Nov 21, 2013 on the grant application to build a gasifier steam boiler plant in order to make Malaysia a 'premier renewable energy based in sustainable wood chip biomass'.

Rafizi, however, pointed out that the grant given to the company for the commercial project involved public funds.

The exorbitant amount also goes against the procedure of grant disbursement under Mosti, Rafizi said.

He said based on Mosti's annual report, the maximum amount given for a project, to date, was RM2 million under the Technology Acquisition Fund (TAF).

Rafizi said the RM100 million grant should not come under R&D because it was intended for commercial projects.

The PKR strategy director had, last Wednesday, claimed that Mosti had misused its R&D grants worth RM1.1 billion.

Mosti deputy minister Abu Bakar Mohamad Diah has denied this claim.

Abu Bakar, yesterday, said the allocation for R&D were given to researchers using tight procedures and that their applications were approved by an evaluation committee comprising experts.

However, Rafizi retorted that Abu Bakar was unaware of the latest RM100 million grant.

"But I do not blame him since this (RM100 million grant) is above his level. This will victimise many researchers and research groups who go through stringent procedures just to get RM500,000 for research.

"This also explains why Malaysia struggles to achieve the right level of R&D commercialisation," he quipped.

Rafizi also asked whether the same flexibility will be given to other companies involved in the technology industry to fund their projects.

"Since Mosti had given a RM100 million grant to this company, would it also give similar grants to other firms wanting to do research?" he added.

He said this episode also proved how the Prime Minister was involved in granting such a huge amount to a company just for R&D.

"We do not know how many other instructions he gave, since the total R&D allocation is RM1.1 billion," said Rafizi.

The PKR strategy director said he would wait for an explanation on the matter from both Najib and Ewon and promised more details on the issue later this week.

PKR questions if Najib interfered in RM100 million grant to company

BY JAMILAH KAMARUDIN

April 21, 2014

UPDATED: Apr 21, 2014 05:48 pm

PKR has today questioned Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak's alleged interference in the approval of a RM100 million research and development (R&D) grant to a company for a commercial project.

PKR strategic director Rafizi Ramli (pic) said Putrajaya had approved the grant application by NSE Resources Corporation through a letter signed by Science, Technology and Innovation Minister, Datuk Dr Ewon Ebin, on January 21.

According to Rafizi, the grant was for the development of a gasifier steam boiler plant.

The approval letter from the ministry apparently referred to a letter from Najib's office dated November 21 last year, after NSE Resources wrote to the prime minister on November 15.

Rafizi claimed the award of the grant goes against existing procedures and regulations, pointing out that the maximum amount given for a project is RM2 million under the Technology Acquisition Fund (TAF).

He said R&D grants were given for commercialisation and technology development purposes and not for a commercial project.

"This is one of the biggest grants given out so far. We do not know the extent of interference as the allocation for R&D grants is huge at RM1.1 billion," he said at a press conference at the PKR headquarters today.

The implication of this, said the Pandan MP, is that NSE Resources does not need to repay the money given to them.

"We have seen how loans were given to NFC and they do not have to return a single sen to the government, what else RM100 million which is given in the form of a grant," he said, referring to the RM250 million National Feedlot Corporation (NFC) cattle scandal that led to the resignation of Wanita Umno chief Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil from the cabinet.

In claiming that he had proof, Rafizi said he would wait for a reply from both Najib and Ewon on the matter. - April 21, 2014.



2:17PM Apr 21, 2014

PKR: Gov't must explain RM100mil non-R&D grant

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PKR strategy director Rafizi Ramli has demanded answers from the government about a RM100 million grant allegedly awarded through improper channels, to a private company involved in renewable energy using steam.

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