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NR-REE research to be conducted in four states



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PUTRAJAYA, Jan 26 -- The research and development of non-radioactive rare earth elements (NR-REE) mining pilot tests will be carried out in four states -- Kelantan, Perak, Pahang and Kedah.

The research will be conducted in collaboration with the Malaysian Nuclear Agency (Nuklear Malaysia) and a mineral mining-based company, Greensnow Technology Sdn Bhd (GTSB).

GTSB director-general, Nik Abdul Mubin Nik Mahmood said the company would fund the research costs amounting to RM450,000 over a 12-month period, while Nuklear Malaysia would conduct research on NR-REE mining exploration.



"The exact locations have not been finalised as we are still waiting for permission from the state governments before we can start the research work," Nik Abdul Mubin said in a virtual press conference after the virtual exchange of a memorandum of agreement (MoA) between GTSB and Nuklear Malaysia.

According to Nik Abdul Mubin, among the studies to be conducted by Nuklear Malaysia would be to identify the effects of mining by using the "in-situ leaching" techniques to dissolve valuable REE such as neodymium, praseodymium, cerium and others found in clay and rocks.



"The MoA is expected to benefit both parties. Nuklear Malaysia can use the data to conduct further studies related to REE while the company can leverage the data to do rare earth mining work in the future," he said.

Meanwhile, Siti A'iasah said through the MoA, GTSB would look for potential areas while Nuklear Malaysia would look at the suitability of an area for mining and compliance with the environmental safety requirements.

"What we do is pre-mining or before doing a mining activity, we ensure that the area to be mined is economically feasible and meets the environmental control aspects," she said.

She said the study to be conducted would not only focus on the presence of NR-REE but could also detect if there were other minerals including petroleum.

When asked about the existence of radioactive elements in the mining areas, Siti A'iasah said the cooperation involved mining of rare earth materials that were not radioactive and if any, the radioactive elements were very low.

"There is no need to worry about the possibility of radioactive pollution or similar pollution," she added.

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