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# New technology won't let rocks slip through net

**KUALA LUMPUR:** North-South Expressway users need not worry about landslides and rock falls as PLUS Expressways Bhd (PEB) has installed five debris flow nets in two high-risk areas.

The technology, from Switzerland, is the first ever to be used by a Southeast Asian country and has been installed in Jelapang and Gua Tempurung and cost PEB RM5 million.

Rings of highly-galvanised steel link together, forming a sturdy net to withstand boulders barrelling down at 25 metres per second and weighing three times the weight of the net.

The nets can last for at least 60 years.

PEB has identified a few other priority areas, including Maokil in Segamat, and expects to complete net installations by year's end.

Stressing on preventive and not curative maintenance, PEB has set aside RM475 million, up from last year's budget of RM400 million, to introduce other technologies to conduct inspections and assessments of the roads.

A Real Time Monitoring System is also part of PEB's preventive-maintenance target.

Installed in six locations spanning the NSE, the system



One of the five debris flow nets installed at Gua Tempurung and Jelapang.

measures the rainfall intensity in the selected areas and the data is transmitted to PEB headquarters to be analysed for long-term and short-term measures.

The system will be installed in another 64 locations by the end of the year.

PEB chief operating officer Nik Airina Nik Jaffar said:

"Universiti Sains Malaysia, Universiti Putra Malaysia and Nottingham University are constantly conducting researches on increasing efficiency and effectiveness of maintenance methodologies.

"Collaboration with local and international universities have produced two robots called R80 and R600 for

drainage-culvert inspection as it is impossible for a human being to enter these drains."

PEB operates 971km, or 64 per cent, of all tolled expressways in the country.

Managing director Noorizah Abdul Hamid said the company constantly strove to upgrade and upkeep road facilities.