

NO59: (F)
MAHATHIR-COAL

KUCHING, JUNE 23 (BERNAMA) - SARAWAK HAS A TREMENDOUS COAL POTENTIAL WHICH COULD BE EXPLOITED TO MEET NOT ONLY LOCAL REQUIREMENTS BUT POSSIBLY ALSO FOR EXPORT. DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY.

AN AMERICAN COMPANY IS INVESTIGATING A 200 MILLION TON-DEPOSIT IN AN UNDISCLOSED AREA, HE TOLD A PRESS CONFERENCE HERE.

AS SOON AS SOME AGREEMENTS CAN BE CONCLUDED WITH THEM I AM SURE THAT THEY WILL BEGIN A MORE DETAILED FEASIBILITY STUDY AND EXPLOITATION, HE SAID.

HE ADDED THAT AT SELATIK, IN SARAWAK'S FIRST DIVISION A 1.2 MILLION TON DEPOSIT WOULD BE JOINTLY EXPLOITED BY LOCAL AND PENINSULAR MALAYIA INTERESTS, INCLUDING THE KADAH STATE GOVERNMENT AND JAPANESE CONCERNS.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID THAT COAL WAS NEEDED FOR THE CEMENT PLANT TO BE SET UP IN LANGKAWI, KEDAH AND THE HIGH QUALITY COAL COULD ALSO BE EXPORTED FOR USE IN STEEL PLANTS. — BERNAMA MORE
1620/18

NO60: (F)
MAHATHIR-COAL 2 KUCHING

HE ADDED THAT ANOTHER AREA IN BINTULU HAS, ALSO BEEN IDENTIFIED WITH A DEPOSIT OF NEARLY 80 MILLION TONS.

ON HYDRO-ELECTRIC POWER (HEP) DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID THIS WAS ANOTHER AREA OF POTENTIAL FOR THE STATE AND IF PROPERLY EXPLOITED IT WOULD BENEFIT THE COUNTRY.

201
HOWEVER, PROBLEMS LIKE HIGH CAPITAL COSTS, WOULD HAVE TO BE DECIDED BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WHICH MIGHT CONSIDER RAISING LOANS FOR SUCH PROJECTS, SIMILARLY WITH OTHER BIG PROJECTS IN THE COUNTRY, HE ADDED.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE HYDRO-POWER POTENTIAL IN SARAWAK WAS SO GREAT THAT THEORETICALLY, IT IS CAPABLE OF SUPPLYING THE ENTIRE NEEDS OF JAPAN.

EVEN THE BALUI/PELAGUS PROJECT IN THE SEVENTH DIVISION COULD SUPPLY A SUBSTANTIAL PORTION OF THE ENERGY NEEDS OF PENINSULAR MALAYSIA BY THE YEAR 2000. — BERNAMA MORE 1623/t B

MAHATHIR-COAL 3 KUCHING

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR WHO VISITED BINTULU YESTERDAY, AND ATTENDED A DEVELOPMENT BRIEFING GIVEN BY THE GENERAL MANAGER OF THE BINTULU DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (BDA) ENCIK SULONG MATJARAE, M PROGRESS TO TURN THE AREA INTO AN INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX HAS BEEN SMOOTH DESPITE SOME PROBLEMS.

THE SUCCESS OF THOSE PROJECTS WOULD DEPEND ON THE RESPONSE ESPECIALLY BY SARAWAKIANS, TO TAKE PART IN ITS DEVELOPMENT, HE ADDED.

HE ALSO INDICATED THAT AN ALUMINIUM SMELTER PLANT MIGHT BE LOCATED IN BINTULU, BUT THIS WOULD DEPEND ON THE AVAILABILITY OF CHEAP ENERGY.

THE GOVERNMENT, HE SAID, HAD NOT GIVEN UP HOPE OF ITS ORIGINAL PLAN TO HAVE A SPONGE IRON PROJECT IN BINTULU BUT A STUDY SHOWS THAT THE FIRST PLANT SHOULD BE LOCATED IN LABUAN, SABAH, WITH THE SECOND ONE ON TRENGGANU.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR ALSO HELD BRIEF DISCUSSIONS WITH CHIEF MINISTER DATUK AMAR HAJI ABDUL TAIB MAHMUD WITH THE SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT MINISTER, TAN SRI DATUK ONG KEE HUI AND THE MINISTER OF ENERGY, POSY AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS, DATUK LEO MOGGIE PRESENT.

IN THE AFTERNOON, HE JOINED STATE MINISTERS, STATE ASSEMBLYMEN AND HEADS OF GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS, AT A STATE LUNCHEON HELD AT THE BANQUET HALL OF THE STATE ASSEMBLY BUILDING. — BERNAMA 1630/1B