

# Malaysia opts for hydro power

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BATANG AI, (Sarawak), Thurs. — Malaysia will continue to develop its hydro-power resources as opposed to nuclear stations, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday.

Commissioning the new \$560-million hydro-project, he added that the reason for this preference was the availability of these resources in a State like Sarawak, which when wholly developed, could generate a massive power of 80,000 megawatts.

However, to undertake such an ambitious programme, the people would have to initially "suffer and sacrifice for a while" in order to build up the country's financial capability to implement it, the Prime Minister said.

He clarified, however, that this would not mean that the people would suffer losses as they would be adequately compensated.

Dr Mahathir said with the availability of cheap power, more industries would mushroom, creating not only more jobs, but also increasing the country's output and export.

The benefits of this would be ploughed back to the people.

He pointed out that as the oil prices spiralled, so would the cost of electricity, making it financially prohibitive for the ordinary people to enjoy the facility.

He said he could not understand why certain groups who had already benefited from the country's progress were now trying to block it.

"But harping on the preservation of the natural environment will not help if the people continue to suffer from poverty."

Dr Mahathir added that although oil could be found in Sabah, Sarawak and Terengganu, it should not be regarded as the exclusive right of the people of these three States.