

# PM: Public can examine EIA report for Bakun Dam

By K.P. Waran and James Ritchie

KUCHING, Tues. — The public can examine Ekran Bhd's detailed Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report at any time, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

"We are doing everything according to the rules. We do not want to be accused of hiding anything. This is as transparent a government as is possible ... that is our policy. We have nothing to hide," he said.

He was responding to reporters' questions on whether the EIA would be made public during a Press conference at the end of his two-day visit to Sarawak.

He said he wanted the Bakun project to be completed earlier as it would mean that money could be earned much sooner in order to pay off the loans.

He said any delay in the RM15 billion hydro-electric project would mean having to wait for a longer period without earning any money while having to pay more

towards accumulated interests on loans.

On the Opposition propaganda that the dam may collapse, causing thousands of people living along the Batang Rajang river to perish, Dr Mahathir said the dam would be properly designed and built.

"We are not asking some Class F contractor to build the dam. We are getting the best possible contractors, engineers from abroad as well from home. I do not know the basis (of the Opposition) who say that it is not strong, even before we have started work on it," he said.

On March 27, the Department of Environment (DOE) approved the first part of the EIA for the construction of the reservoir — six weeks after its submission but without the public feedback which is a standard procedure for the issuance of the order.

The second and third parts of the EIA pertaining to the construction of the dam and the transmission lines — one for land transmission and the other for the 640km submarine cable linking Tanjung Datu in Sa-

rawak to Mersing in Johor — were submitted last Friday.

Dr Mahathir and Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali were seen off at the airport by Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud, deputy Chief Ministers Datuk Amar Alfred Jabu Num-pang and Datuk Amar Wong Sook Kai, State Minister for Environment and Tourism Datuk Amar James Wong Kin Min, State assistant Ministers and senior civil servants.

When asked whether a precedent may be set and the Dewan Rakyat dissolved midway through its meeting which begins next week, Dr Mahathir said:

"Anything is possible. The date of the election will be announced when it is around the corner."

When asked whether he had got the inspiration to call for elections, he said: "I have got the inspiration, but I have not got the date."

Asked to comment on a statement by Opposition leader Lim Kit Siang that if the 1990 general election had been free, fair and clean, his party would have

formed a DAP government in Penang, Dr Mahathir said this was the Opposition's style of campaigning.

"If the people believe him, they can vote for him. He plays on racial sentiments to woo voters. It is obvious that the DAP collaborates with Pas. The DAP fields candidates in some areas where they do not have a chance to win but to reduce the Chinese votes to Barisan Nasional so that Pas can win the seat.

"The leaders of both parties, however, continue to hoodwink the people by claiming there is no collaboration," he said.

On Kelantan deputy Menteri Besar Datuk Mohd Rozali Isohak's statement that disciplinary action may be taken against Kelantan Islamic Affairs department director Wan Lokman Wan Ahmad for releasing information that the Kelantan Government had collected RM15,000 revenue from dog licences, RM600,000 from taxes paid by pawn shops, RM45,000 duties from liquor sales and RM450,000 from bank interest payments, Dr

Mahathir said:

"This is just like Pas. Pas had claimed that when it came to power in Kelantan, it would do away with such practices yet they are going on. Pas leaders had criticised the previous BN State Government on this and other issues but when they are in power, they have done nothing about it.

"In the case of implementing the *hudud* law, they blame the Federal government but in this case, where the jurisdiction is in their hands, they do not do it either."

He said that such taxes were public knowledge and wanting to take action against Wan Lokman under

the Official Secrets Acts was cruel.

He added that Pas had said it would co-operate with Semangat 46 if it came to power in Kelantan but Semangat 46 leaders have since realised that they have to beg for positions.

"What is the use of co-operating when you have to

beg for positions? Tengku Razaleigh (Hamzah) has had to swallow a bitter pill. What choice does he have since without Pas' support, he would not have anything?"

"For someone who wanted to be Prime Minister, he is now a junior partner to Pas and Datuk Nik Aziz (Nik Mat)," he said.