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Mahathir-Bakun

MAHATHIR: DIFFERENCES BETWEEN BAKUN & ABB CAN BE RESOLVED

KUALA LUMPUR, July 22 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said there is no dispute over the RM15.5-billion Bakun hydroelectric dam project in Sarawak.

It would proceed as planned, he said.

The differences between the developer, Ekran Bhd and the contractor, Asea Brown Boveri (ABB), over the engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) contract could be resolved, he said.

"There is no dispute on Bakun...the project will go on," he told a press conference upon his arrival today at the Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah Airport in Subang near here after a two-month-long "working holiday" abroad.

Dr Mahathir was commenting on his deputy Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's observations last Tuesday that a disagreement between the parties over the EPC contract could delay the project.

As a result, Anwar, who was then acting prime minister, had directed Energy, Telecommunications and Posts Minister Datuk Leo Moggie to help the parties involved resolve the matter.

The parties are expected to meet tomorrow at an undisclosed venue.

Dr Mahathir said: "Some people may not be happy...(they may) have personal feelings about certain things, but we will overcome this."

Bakun is a national project, he said, and the government would not allow "personal feelings or unhappiness to come in the way of a project essential to the country."

"All contracts can give rise to a dispute...it can be resolved. We have resolved thousands of problems," the Prime Minister said.

There was speculation that Ekran had wanted the Bakun construction contracts to go to companies linked to it or recommended by it while ABB, the Swiss-Swedish engineering group, had insisted on open tenders.--

BERNAMA

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