

# Bakun dam project to be revived on smaller scale

KUCHING: The Bakun hydroelectric dam project will be revived but on a much smaller scale and at reduced costs, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday.

He said the electricity generated from the dam may only be for Sabah and Sarawak.

Speaking at a press conference here at the end of his two-day visit, Dr Mahathir said the Government was still considering the best way to scale down the project.

"Probably we will have fewer turbines to cater to

the needs (here). These are some of the ideas but we haven't finalised them," he said.

The cost of constructing the Bakun project, sited in the Belaga District in central Sarawak, was initially RM13.5bil.

However, the project was shelved indefinitely last year due to the economic downturn.

Dr Mahathir yesterday stressed that the project was still important to meet the needs of the people and industries in Sarawak and Sabah.

He, however, stressed that no time-frame has

been fixed for the project to be revived and completed.

He said that based on the initial plans for the project (before it was shelved), RM6bil had to be spent to construct an undersea cable to Peninsular Malaysia.

"We will not need this if it (the project) is only for Sarawak and Sabah," he said.

Concerning the compensation to be paid to Ekran, which managed the project before it was shelved, Dr Mahathir said the matter was still under negotiation.

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