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Sabah-IPP

SABAHAN MAKES DEBUT IN IPP VENTURE

KOTA KINABALU, Feb 21 (Bernama) -- There are already five small-sized independent power producers (IPPs) in Sabah, once famous for its blackouts and power shortages.

But there is a welcome difference to the fifth and latest IPP plant that was opened by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in Sandakan on Thursday -- for the first time, it has a Sabahan entrepreneur as a shareholder.

The Beaufort-born Abdul Farish Abdul Rashid, 38, considers himself a pioneer of sorts as it marks a debut for Sabahans in the fledgling independent power supply industry.

"I am thankful to the federal government for having the confidence in me to be a shareholder in the IPP project in Sandakan," said Farish, a director of Petaling Jaya-based Stratavest Sdn Bhd which owns the plant.

Farish is mindful of the fact that the lack or absence of Sabahan participation in major industrial projects, including the IPPs in the state, has been turned into an issue by opposition parties running in the soon-to-be-held state election.

"I hope my own participation will help dispel opposition talk that Sabahans have been left out in the IPP business. I believe if the deal is right, the people of Sabah are capable of going into any business," he told Bernama here.

Farish, a business studies graduate from the United Kingdom, said the frequent power outages in Sabah's East Coast region made it necessary for the IPP plant to be set up in Sandakan to meet the demand for the Sandakan and Lahad Datu districts.

The 60-megawatt plant is expected to be able to cope with demand in the East Coast, which currently has more than 200,000 consumers, up to the next 10 years.

"I don't expect a drastic increase in demand and this present plant is enough for some time to come. But the success of this venture could mean IPPs being set up in other areas in Sabah later," he said.

Prior to the IPP project, Farish did contracts in the oil and gas industry, including a pipeline project in Melaka for Petronas, the national oil company.

--BERNAMA

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