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Develop Bakun project to its full potential, urges Taib

Tan Chin Siang

SARAWAK wants to see the multi-billion ringgit Bakun hydro-electric dam project get "moving" and developed to its "best potential available".

Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud said the State was not particularly concerned about the equity structure of the dam project.

"I have told the Prime Minister that we are quite flexible about the structure of the equity.

"The main thing is to get it moving and developed to the best potential available," he said.

Taib said this in Kuching yesterday after opening a three-day journalism workshop jointly organised by the Malaysian Press Institute and Azam, a non-governmental organisation. It was sponsored by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment.

He, however, did not reveal whether the State was keen to revive Bakun using the original plan or a scaled down version.

Under the original plan, Bakun will be capable of generating 2,400MW of electricity while the scaled down version is only for 500MW.

Taib said the Prime Minister knew better about the nation's energy needs and so could decide how Bakun would fit into the national agenda.

"If it fits well into the national requirement and the growth (in demand for) electricity in the nation requires Bakun to be developed to its full size, I am sure the Federal Government will make that decision."

Recently, Deputy Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr George Chan Hong Nam said the State prefers Bakun to be developed according to the original plan.

Bakun was shelved during the economic downturn and was taken over by the Minister of Finance Inc from Bakun Hydroelectric Corp Bhd in August last year.

Yesterday, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad confirmed that the Bakun project in Belaga would be revived but said the Government had not decided on its scale.

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