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MAHATHIR-BAKUN

NO DECISION YET ON CONTRACTS FOR BAKUN DAM PROJECT

KUALA LUMPUR, June 11 (Bernama) -- The government has not decided on the awarding of contracts for the Bakun hydro-electric dam project but would do so as soon as possible, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said, today.

He said any company making a good offer to the government could land the contract.

"Anybody who makes a good offer deserves to have it. I don't want to discriminate against anybody simply because he is a controversial figure. Even when he wants to do something honest, we say no,no,no," he told reporters.

He said this after launching a book entitled "A Vision Revisited - The Transformation of a National Oil Corporation" at the Petronas Twin-Towers, here. The book is on the history of Petronas and its activities over the last 25 years.

Dr Mahathir was commenting on a newspaper report today which said that Sarawak tycoon, Tan Sri Ting Pek Khing, had won a RM200 million contract to build the Bakun coffer dam project through his company, Global Uphill Sdn Bhd.

The project is part of the RM9 billion Bakun dam project which was revived after being stalled by the regional economic downturn.

Dr Mahathir said the government was not concerned about who is awarded the contract as long as the individual does not violate any laws of the country.

"If the person does something wrong, we would take action. But if the person does not do anything wrong and just wants to do something that is beneficial to us, I think we should evaluate on performance and not on the history," he added.

Meanwhile, asked if the government had allowed Malaysia Airlines to raise domestic airfare for all peninsula Malaysia routes, he said the present airfare for these routes were one of the lowest in the region.

"You must realise that the domestic fare in Malaysia is only one-third of the domestic fare in Indonesia and this is really an imposition on the airline," he said.

He said the national carrier was losing millions due to the low domestic airfare rates.

"It is not really fair for a public limited company to be asked to bear the burden of subsidising something which should be really with the government and not with the private sector," he said. -- BERNAMA

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