PM visits man-made river project

STAR 21 APR 2002

BENGHAZI: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad visited the Great Man-Made River project, dubbed as the Eighth Wonder of the World and the pride of Libya, in the Sahara desert here on Friday.

Work on the first phase of the mammoth US$19.58bil (RM74.4bil) project began on Aug 28, 1991.

It comprises 1,300 water wells - which are 500m deeo -and the water is channelled into five gigantic dams supplying water for domestic, agricultural and industrial use.

It involves a pipeline network totalling 3,500km and supplies about 6.5 million cubic metres of water daily to as far as the capital city of Tripoli, about 670km from here.

The five dams have a total capacity of 54.9 million cubic metres of water at any one time.

The project was mooted by Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi in 1984.

During a briefing, a Libyan government official said the project had succeeded in converting 159,000ha of the arid land for agriculture.

The Prime Minister and his entourage were taken to visit the completed Omar Mokhtar Dam, about 50km from Benghazi Airport, before being briefed on the entire project in Suluq here.

Dr Mahathir left for Bahrain yesterday for a two-day official visit.