

**Taib: Opposition can't trap me on departure date**  
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Sarawak Chief Minister Abdul Taib Mahmud will not be bullied into naming a successor or a resignation date, simply because the opposition wants him to.

The opposition cannot trap me. We are not that naïve to (state a date). We will do it the proper way," he said when met in Kuching today.

"I will not be hemmed-in by people who can't even run their own party."

Taib said this when approached by reporters at the signing of a price purchase agreement (PPA) between Sarawak Energy Bhd and four multinational companies, under a Sarawak Corridor of Renewable Energy (Score) project.

The chief minister has come under fire in the state election campaign because his 30-year tenure does not appear to be ending any time soon.

Yesterday, Taib said he would step down in a "few years time" despite Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's claim that Taib will go after the state election on Saturday.

He is the main target of the opposition campaign, with voters being told that 'any vote for BN is a vote for Taib' and about his alleged corrupt practices.

Among the allegations levelled against him and his government is that they are involved in vast land-grabs, some involving companies linked to his family, for state and private projects, including hydroelectric dams.

Today, Taib said his government was ready to "bend over backwards" to meet the needs of industry and that it was all set to build more dams on top of the mammoth Bakun hydroelectric dam.

"We'll go for Baram and Pelagus, where technical studies are done. Murum (will be) ready by 2014. (In) Limbang, we have a joint venture with Brunei. By 2020, we will have 6,000-7,000 megawatts of electric power," he said.

"I don't foresee any major problems coming from Sarawak Energy Board and the industries."

The state, he said, was adamant bakun dam and electricity electric that all the power produced by the Bakun dam, which has displaced about 10,000 natives, would be used for state industries.

"That is what the prime minister told me," said Taib.

He added that more than 6,000ha of land in Samalaju, in Kuching, have been cleared for development and that the state was ready to accept new factories.

**'Immoral position'**

The four companies that signed the PPA agreement today are Press Metal Bhd, OM Materials Pte Ltd, Tokoyama Malaysia Bhd and Asia Minerals Ltd. Their combined investments total RM10 billion.

Taib later held a closed-door meeting with the Association of Churches. Among those present were Kuching Archbishop John Ha and Anglican Church Bishop Bolly Lapo.

Torstein Dale Sjøtveit Earlier, Sarawak Energy Board chief executive officer Torstein Dale Sjøtveit (left) said it was hypocritical of developed countries to condemn Sarawak for developing its natural resources.

"(Developed countries) have exploited 80 to 90 percent of their natural resources and built great national wealth. What gives (them) the right to come to Sarawak to say we shouldn't develop our natural resources for our people?" said the Norwegian.

"It is an immoral position to take... we develop (our resources) in a much more sustainable way than the developed world has ever done."

Sarawak has been globally criticised for the rampant exploitation of resources, most recently by the London-based whistleblower website Sarawak Report.

The website has claimed that it was hacked and its site has been disabled over the past few days.

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