

Musa: No decision yet on when to resume project

By RUBEN SARIO
newsdesk@thestar.com.my

KOTA KINABALU: Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Musa Aman has not made any decision yet on when to resume construction of the RM4.5mil clubhouse project on the environmentally-sensitive diving haven of Pulau Sipadan.

Musa, however, brushed aside calls to scrap the Sipadan project and stop the logging at the Malua and Ulu Segama forest reserves which had been bequeathed as Malaysia's biodiversity gifts to the world.

He said everything that needed explaining on both controversial moves affecting the environment had been done.

"As long as we don't have to hide anything, we don't have to worry," he said after chairing a two-hour monthly Sabah Umno liaison committee meeting.

Musa, who briefed the committee on his meeting with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi over the Sipadan project, among the other matters, said the state Umno leaders accepted his explanation.

The Prime Minister voiced his anger with Musa on Wednesday night over the Sipadan project following the scraping of coral reefs by a barge carrying construction materials to the island on May 14. Musa met Abdullah in Kuala Lumpur on Thursday.

Repeating the statement issued after he met Abdullah, Musa said: "There is no restaurant, no clubhouse. It is only very basic facilities for divers and staff quarters.

"I have said many times, only light materials will be used for it (Sipadan project)."

The state government was

waiting for the outcome of a study by Sabah Parks and the Sipadan project consultant, Musa said, adding that there was no rush to get the project going again.

He said he had asked state Tourism, Culture and Environment Minister Tan Sri Chong Kah Kiat and Sabah Parks officials to be prepared to brief the Prime Minister again if necessary.

On the calls by environmentalists to immediately stop logging in Malua and Ulu Segama, Musa said: "We have already explained it. If you want us to replay it, it's not fair to us. We are now busy preparing for the 9th Malaysia Plan."

Logging in the wildlife rich Ulu Segama and Malua reserves is due to be phased out by the end of 2007 and environmental groups fear that continued logging will jeopardise the habitat for wildlife.