

## **Harness rivers as best as possible, Mahathir advises Sarawak**

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KUCHING, July 15 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad today proposed that Sarawak harness its rivers as best as possible, saying these assets had great potential to provide much benefit for the people.

He said rivers could serve as a means of transportation and they could also be utilised to generate power. Sarawak boasts many large and long rivers.

"Land is still big in Sarawak because the population is quite small. By comparison to the river, development of land is now subject to environmental considerations. But with rivers, we can make many things - transportation, generation of power."

"From the briefing that was given to me, I see the potential for Sarawak's growth. Much depends on how we make use of the assets," Dr Mahathir said to reporters after attending a briefing, for about 45 minutes, on the development of Sarawak at Wisma Bapa Malaysia in Petra Jaya here.

The briefing was given by Sarawak state secretary Tan Sri Mohamad Morshidi Abdul Ghani. Also present were Chief Minister Datuk Patinggi Abang Johari Tun Openg, Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Amar Douglas Uggah Embas and state Cabinet ministers.

After the briefing, Dr Mahathir was presented with a cake in conjunction with his birthday. The Prime Minister turned 93 on July 10.

Elaborating on the briefing, Dr Mahathir said he was also informed about foreign investment in Sarawak.

"I learned that development is not restricted to Kuching. Industries have also come up in other areas and there has been much foreign investment. I am sure the foreign investment can be stepped up," he said.

**Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad received a souvenir from Sarawak Chief Minister Datuk Patinggi Abang Johari Tun Openg after cutting his cake in conjunction with his 93rd birthday anniversary at Wisma Bapa Malaysia in Petra Jaya today. Earlier, Dr Mahathir attended a closed-door briefing on Sarawak's development at Wisma Bapa Malaysia.**

Asked about the relationship between the federal government and Sarawak, Dr Mahathir said there was good cooperation between the two governments.

"We have already met several times, and we find that there is good cooperation between the federal and Sarawak governments," he said.

Following the defeat of the Barisan Nasional in the 14th General Election in May, the Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Sarawak (PBB), Sarawak United People's Party, Parti Rakyat Sarawak and Progressive Democratic Party in Sarawak quit BN to form an independent state-based coalition called Gabungan Parti Sarawak (GPS) that announced it was friendly to the federal ruling Pakatan Harapan coalition.

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