

Malaysians and Thais agree on tapping oil, gas

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From Balan Moses

PATTAYA, Sun. — Malaysia and Thailand have reached consensus on the sovereignty and civil jurisdiction of the Joint Development Authority (JDA) in overseeing the tapping of oil and gas resources in the Gulf of Thailand.

Prime Minister **Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad** said the agreement would be initialed by both countries by June to allow the matter to be raised in their Parliaments.

The scheduled initialing yesterday by the two leaders was unexpectedly postponed following differences over the two issues.

"Although we were unable to initial the agreement yesterday, officials from both sides managed to resolve all (outstanding) matters last night and the agreement will be initialled later," he said at a joint Press conference with Thai Prime Minister Gen **Tun Chatichai Choonhavan** at the U-Tapao Naval Air Station before leaving for home after a two-day official visit to Thailand.

Dr Mahathir said the two issues re-

solved last night would be explained later as "they are rather detailed and technical".

Referring to the agreement initialled yesterday on the ferry service between Rantau Panjang and Takbai, he said the service would be launched soon.

Describing his visit as "very fruitful and successful", he said he discussed several other bilateral issues with Tun Chatichai including tourism, the Cambodia issue, the supply of palm oil, gas and cement to Thailand and the Thai proposal to Malaysia to take part in the development of the southern Thai seaboard.

"This visit has resulted in very good understanding between our two countries. From now, we should be able to expedite certain projects which are in the pipeline."

He said Tun Chatichai had agreed to allow Malaysia to use the soon-to-be-completed bridge between Thailand and Laos to transport goods to Laos.

"This is in line with our allowing Thailand to transport goods to Singapore through Malaysia."

Dr Mahathir said Thailand had agreed to expedite the Orient Express project that would involve rail travel from Singapore to Bangkok via Kuala Lumpur.

"We eventually hope to extend the line to Vientiane in Laos."

The leaders also discussed the possibility of day trips by Malaysians to the Thai islands of Terutao and Adang.

The Prime Minister said there was a lot Malaysia could learn about tourism from Thailand.

"We hope to one day have joint promotion of our tourist spots. In fact we have already started doing it (on a limited basis). We are also planning more flights between Phuket, Langkawi and Penang."

On the supply of cement, he said Malaysia had agreed to supply 120,000 tonnes to Thailand annually.

Dr Mahathir said he had also agreed to facilitate the export of hydrogenated palm oil to Thailand.

On the Cambodian issue, he said Malaysia would study the Thai proposal for the establishment of a neutral camp.