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MTJA A SUCCESS OF TEAMWORK BETWEEN TWO NATIONS IN ONE REGION

KUALA LUMPUR, May 29 (Bernama) -- The Malaysia-Thailand Joint Authority (MTJA) is now recognised throughout the world as the first such organisation which has been successfully created through co-operation between two countries in the same region, said Thai Prime Minister Banharn Silpa-Archa, today.

MTJA reflected the spirit of co-operation between two neighbouring countries and the spirit of solidarity of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), he said during his visit to the MTJA office here.

"The co-operative spirit shown by Thailand and Malaysia to solve problem arising from overlapping territorial claims through the establishment of a joint-venture development area also sets a good model on how countries in Asia should set aside their differences and resolve existing problems through regional co-operation and peaceful means," added Banharn.

The establishment of MTJA was initiated 17 years ago when Malaysian Prime Minister Tun Hussein Onn and his Thai counterpart General Kriengsak Chomanan signed a Memorandum of Understanding for the establishment of a joint authority, Banharn said.

The joint-authority was for the exploration of the resources of the sea-bed in overlapped areas where the continental shelves were claimed by both countries in the Gulf of Thailand, he added.

Banharn said the historical milestone was made possible because of the far-sighted visions of both the nations' leaders that reflected that "people should work closely and harmoniously as one like brothers drinking from the same well."

He added that natural gas from the Thailand and Malaysia Joint Development area was now expected to come on stream in January 1999.

Banharn is leading a 60 member delegation on a two-day official visit to Malaysia starting today to strengthen bilateral ties and promote economic cooperation.

Together with Malaysia's Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, he would witness the signing of two memoranda of understanding on the sale and purchase of natural gas between MTJA, its production sharing contractors and the joint-buyers of the gas. -- BERNAMA

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