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Mahathir-Ting

PM SAYS TING PEK KHIING HAD MILD STROKE

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 2 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Dr Mahathir Mohamad confirmed today that the executive chairman of Ekran Bhd, Tan Sri Ting Pek Khiing, had a mild stroke recently.

However, Dr Mahathir said that Ting's health would not affect the Bakun hydroelectric dam project.

He said: "Ting suffered a mild stroke on his left side...and as a doctor, I know if it hit the right side, it will affect his speech.

"But you can see he can speak very well," he told reporters after the signing of the twice-postponed engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) contract for the RM13.6 billion Bakun hydroelectric project between Bakun Hydro-Electric Corporation Bhd (BHC) and the international ABB-CBPO Consortium.

Dr Mahathir said that he has advised Ting to go back to the hospital for further treatment although the latter wanted to go back to work on the Bakun project.

Rumours of Ting's health had surfaced after the signing of the contract, which had already been postponed once to last Monday and then postponed yet again indefinitely. Reports said that he was hospitalised in Singapore.

The Prime Minister said he was very happy that the contract had been signed, adding that work had already started yesterday..."if there are problems we will solve them."

Dr Mahathir also said he expects the project to be completed on schedule in five years time.

When approached by reporters, Ting, who looked fit, said he too was happy that the contract has been signed.

"I'm all right...I'm feeling well, but I will take it easy," he said.

At the signing, BHC was represented by Ting, who is its executive chairman as well as of Ekran which has a 32 per cent equity stake in BHC.

Goran Lindahl, the executive vice-president of ABB and Marco Elie Altit, the director of CBPO, were the other signatories.

Under the terms of the contract, the project should start no later than Jan 1 next year while the initial operation date and the commercial operation date should be not later than Oct 31, 2002 and Aug 31, 2003 respectively.

The contract also calls for about 40 per cent of the contract value to be given to locals.

There should also be transfer of technology to Malaysia by providing suitable and adequate training and implementation programmes.

In this connection, there is a provision for the establishment of a power technology centre in Malaysia to facilitate technology transfer.

At the same time, there are strict requirements in the contract for the ABB-CBPO consortium to comply with environmental protection as required by the Natural Resources and Environmental Board of Sarawak. -- BERNAMA

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