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India-Renong

RENONG EXPECTED TO SIGN INDIAN HIGHWAY DEAL IN NOVEMBER

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 19 (Bernama) -- Malaysian conglomerate Renong Berhad is expected to sign an agreement with an Indian company in November to jointly construct the proposed US\$20 billion (RM50 billion) All-India Superhighway connecting major cities in India, Works Minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu said today.

He said the agreement is expected to be signed in New Delhi during the planned visit to India by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

The signing might be witnessed by Dr Mahathir and Indian Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda, he told reporters after talks with visiting Indian Foreign Minister Inder Kumar Gujral here.

Samy Vellu said Renong might secure a 30 per cent stake in the 11,000km highway project.

He said India has also offered Malaysian companies participation in port construction projects.

The Indian minister arrived yesterday for a three-day visit.

At a meeting with Foreign Minister Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi later, Gujral indicated that his government would look into Malaysia Airlines' request to have more flights to India.

Abdullah told reporters he informed Gujral that issuing visas for Indian nationals to enter Malaysia would not be a problem so long as they are genuine travellers.

Asked if they discussed the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), the proposed global pact to ban nuclear testings, Abdullah said he explained Malaysia's view that there should be a nuclear-free world.

He said Gujral explained to him India's stand "and we understand each other's position but the final objective is to see a nuclear-free world".

India has opposed the CTBT now being negotiated in Geneva. New Delhi says the draft treaty does not commit the nuclear powers to disarmament within a specified time frame.

Describing the current Malaysia-India relations as very good, Abdullah said New Delhi's inclusion as an Asean dialogue partner recently has brought the sub-continent closer to Malaysia.

"This new partnership is also set to enhance the South-South cooperation," he said.

Abdullah said Malaysia supports the Indian Ocean Rim Conference mooted by India and is interested to attend the conference to be held in Mauritius this year.

Gujral said the new partnership would create a better future for the two countries.

He said India and Malaysia have identified new areas of investment such as in road, energy and infrastructure development.

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