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Sulaiman-Thailand

MALAYSIA, THAILAND SIGN GOLOK RIVER PROJECT

KUALA LUMPUR, March 8 (Bernama) -- Malaysia and Thailand today signed an agreement for the Golok River Mouth Improvement Project that would among other things help to determine a more precise boundary demarcation between the two countries.

The project will also benefit both countries by improving the drainage in the area, reduce flooding and enhance the use of the river mouth for fishing boats, said Agriculture Minister Datuk Amar Dr Sulaiman Daud at the signing ceremony in Narathiwat in Thailand.

"A project of this nature will not only bring economic benefits to the local community but also strengthens the existing cordial relationship between our two countries," he said. The text of his speech was released here.

The Agriculture Ministry said in a statement that Dr Sulaiman and Thailand's Minister of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Shucheeep Hansaward signed the inter governmental agreement for the implementation of the project.

The signing comes 10 days after both countries agreed during talks between Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his visiting Thai counterpart Gen Chavalit Yongchaiyudh to resolve the border demarcation problem within two months.

The 15-year-old demarcation problem arose mainly because both countries used rivers as border marks and these posed a problem because the rivers keep changing as a result of flooding.

Dr Sulaiman said the project would stabilise the river mouth for a more precise demarcation of the boundary between Malaysia and Thailand.

The project being implemented by the Department of Irrigation and Drainage Malaysia and the Royal Irrigation Department of Thailand is being carried out in two phases.

Phase 1 comprises the construction of breakwaters, revetments, and the placement of navigational aids by both Malaysia and Thailand in their respective territories.

"These works are progressing well and are scheduled for completion this year," said Dr Sulaiman who made an aerial inspection of the project site with Shucheeep after the signing ceremony.

He said the second stage of the project involving the dredging of the Golok River Mouth and construction of protection works will begin soon and expected to be completed by September. -- BERNAMA

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