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Mahathir-Gas

MAHATHIR, CHUAN LEEKPAI TO WITNESS ACCORD ON GAS PURCHASE

PULAU PINANG, April 20 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his Thai counterpart Chuan Leekpai will witness the signing of two agreements to buy natural gas from the Malaysia-Thailand Joint Development Area in Songkhla on Wednesday.

The ceremony is expected to be held at the Prem Tinsulanond Park, said Malaysia-Thailand Joint Authority (MTJA) deputy chief executive officer Dr Songpope Polachan.

The agreements will be inked between the seller -- MTJA and buyers -- Petronas and Petroleum Authority of Thailand, he told BERNAMA when contacted in Kuala Lumpur.

The first agreement is for the purchase of 390 million cubic feet of natural gas a day from Block B-18 for 20 years, he said.

The gas from the area is expected to be on stream in the first half of 2001.

The second agreement is for the purchase of 250 million cubic feet of natural gas a day for 16 years from Block B-17 and C-19, which will be on stream from the third quarter of 2002.

The contractors for Block B-18 are Triton Oil Company and Petronas Carigali while PTT Exploration and Production, a subsidiary of Petroleum Authority of Thailand (PTT), is the contractor for Block B-17 and C-19.

Dr Mahathir is expected to hold a bilateral meeting with Chuan and attend a dinner hosted by the latter in Haadyai before returning to Kuala Lumpur.

Meanwhile, Wisma Putra said Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and senior government officials would accompany Dr Mahathir on his one-day working visit.

Besides witnessing the agreement signing, Dr Mahathir and Chuan would also discuss bilateral, regional and international issues of common interest.

This is Dr Mahathir's second visit to Thailand this year after a two-day working visit to Bangkok on Feb 5 and 6.

Dr Mahathir and Chuan last met at the Second Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) in London on April 3 and 4.

-- BERNAMA

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