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PAKISTAN-POWER

MALAYSIA URGES PAKISTAN TO GIVE GREEN LIGHT FOR TNB PROJECT

PUTRAJAYA, March 28 (Bernama) -- Visiting Pakistani chief executive General Pervez Musharraf has promised to look into Tenaga Nasional Berhad's request to commence its US\$50-million (RM190 million) second phase of the 235-MW combined-cycle Liberty Power Project in Sind, Pakistan.

Musharraf gave the undertaking to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad during a meeting between the two leaders at the Prime Minister's Department here.

Briefing reporters on their discussion, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said Malaysia had asked Pakistan to accelerate the approval for the second phase.

"We have asked them to allow for the second phase to commence so that the project can be economically viable and sustainable," he said.

The minister also said the Pakistani leader, who arrived here yesterday for a three-day working visit, had pledged to resolve all bureaucratic problems and uncertainties in commercial rules and regulations in Pakistan.

Tenaga Nasional bought the entire minority shareholder interests in Liberty Power Ltd, the developer of the Liberty Power Project, in 1998.

There had been uncertainty in the business sector since Musharaff toppled prime minister Nawaz Sharif in a bloodless coup on Oct 12 last year.

Syed Hamid said the first phase of the project was almost completed.

"I think we have put in a lot of money for the first phase to make it more attractive and to give better returns, and also to benefit Pakistan," he added.

Syed Hamid said Musharraf informed Dr Mahathir during their two-hour meeting that Pakistan wanted to encourage foreign investment.

He said Pakistan wanted to give special attention to Malaysia's participation in investment in Pakistan "because they consider Malaysia as a good friend".

Syed Hamid also said in their discussion on economic cooperation, Dr Mahathir and Musharraf agreed to increase trade between the countries which was now in favour of Malaysia.

In 1998, Pakistan imported US\$773 million of palm oil, electronic goods, rubber and tin from Malaysia but exported only US\$30.2 million of cotton, leather products, surgical instruments, fabrics, fresh fruits, seafood and mixed yarn. --BERNAMA

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