

26 APR 2001

THAILAND NOT PRESSED INTO STARTING GAS PROJECT, SAYS SYED HAMID

JOHOR BAHRU, April 26 (Bernama) -- Malaysia did not press Thailand into starting the Trans Thai-Malaysia gas pipeline project in three months but it did inform that Petronas would incur higher costs if the project remains delayed.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra is aware of the cost burden as the matter was raised by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad during their meeting in Putrajaya on Tuesday.

"What is important here is for both sides, following the meeting between the two prime ministers, to be keen on continuing with the project," he said when contacted by Bernama here today.

"We appreciate the Thai readiness to overcome the delay."

Syed Hamid was asked to comment on an agency report from Bangkok that quoted Thaksin as denying he had given an assurance that the gas pipeline project could be started in three months.

The RM4 billion project, running some 350km between Songkhla in Thailand and Bukit Kayu Hitam in Malaysia, is a joint effort between Petronas and Petroleum Authority of Thailand from developing the gas fields in the Joint Development Area in the Gulf of Thailand.

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