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M'SIA-CHIP

M'SIA ACQUIRES PROPERTY RIGHTS TO WORLD'S MOST ADVANCED MICROCHIP

PUTRAJAYA, Sept 9 (Bernama) -- Malaysia today acquired the property rights to the most advanced microchip in the world known as Malaysian Microchip (MMChip).

The MM chip measures 0.25 sq mm -- about the size of a decimal point -- and can be embedded in paper. It is useful for a variety of purposes, such as a replacement for barcode tags in retail goods, for differentiating between genuine and counterfeit currency notes, and for use in passports.

The acquisition was marked by a signing of an agreement between the Malaysian government and First Hill Electronics Co. (M) Sdn Bhd at the Prime Minister's Office. It was witnessed by Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

The deal gives Malaysia the right to design the microchip and its production and marketing.

The MM chip is a multiband RFID (next-generation radio frequency identification) chip, which means that it would also be usable in the United States and Europe, which have adopted a different RFID frequency standard from that in Japan.

Dr Mahathir said that the chip will be initially produced in Japan but later would be manufactured in Malaysia at the facilities of Silterra Malaysia Sdn Bhd, a semi-conductor manufacturer based in Kulim Technology Park.

However, the prime minister declined to disclose the amount paid to FEC Inc, a Japanese R&D company which designed the chip.

It was reasonably priced, he said.

Asked when Malaysia will expect to recoup the investment, Dr Mahathir said: "It is more important to know and understand the technology that is useful for Malaysia.

"We are not looking at the money but rather the technological advancement," he told reporters after the signing ceremony.

Dr Mahathir said the microchip which has a built-in antenna, unlike other microchip available now, could be used for various applications from health to security.

The agreement was signed by the Minister at the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Dr Rais Yatim and FEC Malaysia Sdn Bhd chief executive officer Kunioki Ichioka.

FEC Malaysia is a 50-50 joint venture between the Malaysian government and FEC Inc. of Japan. -- BERNAMA

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