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PM-PORT

PM: GOVT STILL STUDYING BINTULU PORT CHARGES FOR MISC LNG TANKERS

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BINTULU, May 8 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the government is still studying the proposal to review the allegedly high port charges for liquefied natural gas (LNG) tankers owned by Petronas at Bintulu Port and an announcement will be made soon.

Malaysian International Shipping Corporation (MISC), a subsidiary of Petronas, has to pay Bintulu Port about RM800,000 per shipment in port charges and this is about half the amount when compared with ports in Japan. Japanese utility companies are major buyers of Malaysia's LNG.

"For Petronas, it may be high but for the government, it is relatively cheap," he told a press conference here after officiating at the opening of the RM16.6 billion Petronas LNG complex today.

The LNG complex houses the Malaysia LNG 1, Malaysia LNG 2 and Malaysia LNG 3 plants while Bintulu Port is majority owned by the government.

Petronas recently highlighted the relatively high port charges imposed by Bintulu Port on LNG tankers owned by MISC.

Petronas president and chief executive officer Tan Sri Mohd Hassan Marican had spoken about the need for Malaysia's LNG exports to be cost-competitive in all aspects.

"But it is up to the shareholders (of Bintulu port) to figure out," the prime minister said when commenting on the response by transport minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik on Bintulu Port's charges that the government was prepared to review the charges.

"There are quite a lot of things which we have to review. Some we will give, some we will not," said Dr Mahathir. -- BERNAMA

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