

PM: Petronas' LNG vessel awesome, unimaginable

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GEOJE: Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad expressed his admiration for Petroliam Nasional Bhd's (Petronas) Floating Liquefied Natural Gas Dua (PFLNG Dua), which is able to reach deepwater gas reserves located up to 1,500m underwater.

"This is awesome, it is unimaginable. This is so big. The size if it stands up straight, it is almost as tall as the Petronas Twin Towers," he said on the overall length of the vessel, which is 393m.

"The facilities are advanced, they can do all (the processes of

extracting LNG) on the ship. They are operated by Malaysians and that is something we can be proud of," he told Bernama and TV3 after visiting the vessel at the Samsung Heavy Industries Geoje Shipyard.

Dr Mahathir was accompanied by his wife, Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, who was the "Lady Sponsor" and carried out the ceremonial rope cutting at the vessel's official naming as PFLNG Dua here yesterday.

The vessel, which can accommodate gas production, offshore

pipeline and gas liquefaction, as well as storage and offloading facilities, will be deployed at the Rotan Gas Field, located 140km offshore Kota Kinabalu, Sabah.

It is scheduled to sail in February next year.

It is 100 per cent owned by Petronas and is being constructed by a consortium made up of JGC Corporation of Japan and Samsung Heavy Industries of South Korea.

"It is good to have this kind of cooperation as each country has its own strengths and experi-

ences we can tap on," said Dr Mahathir.

"In the process, I think Malaysians must learn about design and shipbuilding, and things like that.

"We do not go the same way as (South) Korea, Korea plans to be big. Malaysia mostly looks onto the domestic market.

"We should look into Korea's strategy and emulate it."

Dr Mahathir said it was possible for Malaysia to build such facilities if it learnt the trade.

On whether Petronas could

build another FLNG vessel, he said Malaysia had enough LNG reserves, but that depended on the demand for the substance.

"It all depends on demand. We have enough reserves to have another one and this is a moving platform.

"We can move it to other countries. So maybe if there is a need for other countries (they can charter it from Petronas)."

The visit to the facility here in South Gyeongsang province is part of Dr Mahathir's official visit to the country. **Bernama**