



Mahathir being offered the traditional bread by a Turkmen maiden on arriving for a dinner gathering with Malaysians residing in Turkmenistan on Sunday night. – **BERNAMAPIX**

Turkmenistan wants to extend contract with Petronas to 2038: Mahathir

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ASHGABAT (Turkmenistan): The Turkmenistan government wants to extend the production sharing contract (PSC) with Petroliaam Nasional Bhd (Petronas) to 2038, says Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

The prime minister said Turkmenistan President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov expressed his wish at a meeting between the two leaders on Sunday.

"I discussed the matter with the president (of Turkmenistan) and he welcomed the role of Petronas in Turkmenistan. He expressed his wish that Petronas should continue to be active here, and he mentioned a further 10-year extension," Mahathir told Malaysian journalists at a press conference on Sunday night before ending his two-day official visit to Turkmenistan yesterday.

In 1996, Petronas was given a 32-year PSC

until 2028 to produce natural gas in the Block 1 offshore area in the Caspian Sea.

Mahathir said that in Turkmenistan, Petronas's involvement is wholly in the production of oil and gas, compared to just 15% in Azerbaijan.

Turkmenistan has the world's fourth largest underground reserves of natural gas after Russia, Iran and Qatar.

It has 20 trillion cubic meters of proven reserves of natural gas, although the total may be higher as natural gas deposits in the country have yet to be fully explored.

Mahathir said the PSC extension shows the Turkmenistan government is satisfied with the role played by Petronas, and expressed confidence the country will consider giving more concessions to Malaysia's national oil company. – **Bernama**