

Najib Launches Kiyarly Gas Treatment Plant And Onshore Gas Terminal
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By Khairdzir Yunus

URKMENBASY (Turkmenistan), July 12 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak together with Turkmenistan President Gurbanguly Berdimuhammedov launched the Kiyarly Gas Treatment Plant and Onshore Gas Terminal here Tuesday.

Describing the occasion as "a truly momentous day" in the history of bilateral relations between Malaysia and Turkmenistan, Najib said the project was an incredible achievement that marked the successful completion of the first Malaysian-led effort in a major offshore gas development in Turkmenistan.

"We are honoured by the trust the Government of Turkmenistan has shown in our national oil and gas company, Petronas, in enabling them to take forward this significant development," he said in his speech at the launch site by the Caspian Sea, about 600km from the capital of Turkmenistan, Ashgabat.

The prime minister was also pleased that Petronas had been able to play a part in realising the potential of Turkmenistan's natural wealth.

"Consistent with its mission to contribute to the wellbeing of host nations and peoples wherever it operates, Petronas has also been able to help lay the foundations of the long-term prosperity of Turkmenistan's oil and gas industry beyond simply realising immediate value from the natural wealth of the land," Najib said.

He said Petronas had continued to demonstrate its commitment to being a long-term partner in the socio-economic development of Turkmenistan through providing opportunities like work-related exchanges, technology-based skills training, professional capability building and education sponsorship programmes for Turkmen nationals.

Najib, who is on a two-day official visit to Turkmenistan since Monday, said today's landmark event was a reminder of just how far both countries had come since talks were first opened between the Government of Turkmenistan and Petronas that culminated in the award of Turkmenistan's first offshore Production Sharing Contract in July 1996.

"Since then, I am pleased to note that Petronas has achieved several key milestone in its operation here, including drilling in Turkmenistan's first offshore exploration well, Magtymguly-1X, in East Livanov.

"They were also the first to use the offshore Extended Well Test method in the Diyarbekir Field of the Caspian, an innovative new concept that led to the successful lifting of 40,000 barrels of crude oil while the Mobile Offshore Production Unit and Floating Storage and Offloading facilities in the Caspian were completed in 17 months.

The launch of the Kiyarly Gas Treatment Plant and Onshore Gas Terminal -- two process trains with a combined production capacity of up to 500 million standard cubic feet per day and a 53 km pipeline that links the Terminal to the export pipeline of Central Asia Centre 3 -- will further enhance these integrated operations.

The prime minister also said that he was delighted to note that the Gas Sales Agreement signed by the Government of Turkmenistan, Petronas and Turkmengaz yesterday would facilitate the commercialisation of gas production volume from these facilities.

"It is my great pleasure to note that Petronas has embarked on numerous collaborative efforts between our two countries in fields including trade and the economy, energy and

social responsibility and education and capacity building.

"Each year, for example, Petronas provides sponsorship for the Turkmenistan International Oil and Gas Conference and Exhibitions and similar events to support the collaboration between Government and industry and to promote external networking in the pursuit of economic growth."

Meanwhile, Najib said Petronas was working closely with the Government of Turkmenistan to promote academic excellence by nurturing the young talent on whom the future prosperity of this country will depend.

More than US\$3.7 million has been invested in its academic sponsorship programme since it was launched in 1998, providing opportunities for some 110 Turkmen students to undergo technical degree programmes in Electrical and Electronic, Chemical, Mechanical, Civil and Petroleum Engineering, as well as Information Technology, at the Universiti Teknologi Petronas in Malaysia.

Since 2005, Petronas has also invested some US\$10.5 million in its Technician Training Programme, benefitting a total of 229 Turkmen nationals in various related trades.

"I am happy to note that to date while the majority has gained employment in the oil and gas industry, 18 of those graduates have been appointed as Technical Executives and another 71 have been recruited as technicians.

"All are currently involved in Block 1 offshore and onshore activities, including the commissioning and start-up of the facilities that I am proud to launch today. Petronas' Localisation Programme also strives to accelerate the capability development of its Turkmen employees with a target of 80 per cent local content by 2015," he said.

Najib said in responding to the need of the community, Petronas has consistently sponsored a number of Corporate Social Responsibility programmes, particularly in the field of education where it has supported the Turkmenistan State Boarding School for hearing-impaired children in Ashgabat, purchased books for children's libraries in 64 local schools, and provided aid to more than 50 institutions including orphanages and welfare homes.

Also present at the launch were Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Anifah Aman and Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Tan Sri Nor Mohamed Yakcop who were accompanying Najib during the visit, and Petronas President & CEO Datuk Shamsul Azhar Abbas.

Meanwhile during a press conference at the Turkmenbasy airport, Najib said building the plant involved an investment of US\$5.2 billion by Petronas.

On the outcome of his visit, he said the President and Government of Turkmenistan gave him a very cordial treatment and they viewed Malaysia as a long term partner.

The Prime Minister said President Berdimuhammedov also expressed his desire to visit Malaysia and the date would be determined soon.

Najib who ended his two-day visit to Turkmenistan Tuesday, left with his wife Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor for London for an official visit to the United Kingdom beginning Wednesday till July 15.

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