

China, Singapore visits on the cards - Lim Guan Eng

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PUTRAJAYA, June 9 (Bernama) -- The RM9.4 billion gas pipeline project will be among the topics on the table for discussions for the Finance Minister Lim Guan Eng's maiden trip to China as part of the new government.

"It will be a courtesy visit," said Lim, adding that it would not be solely for the pipeline project or the East Coast Rail Link (ECRL) but on the larger bilateral perspective as well.

"We will have to decide on the right time and now we are in the midst of celebrating Hari Raya Aidilfitri. But once Raya break is over, that is the first we would do," he said in an interview with Bernama on Friday.

After taking over the Ministry, Lim revealed dubious projects signed by Suria Strategic Energy Resources Sdn Bhd (SSER) which is suspected to be linked to 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) fiasco.

SSER is a wholly-owned Ministry of Finance subsidiary set up on May 19, 2016 with the specific intent to undertake the Multi-Product Pipeline (MPP) and Trans-Sabah Gas Pipeline (TSGP) projects.

The payments for the said projects made based on timeline milestones and not progressive work done resulted in RM8.3 billion or 88 per cent of the projects' total value being paid despite only 13 per cent work completion.

Following this, the Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad had recently instructed Lim and the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission officials to go to China to engage in discussions with the parties involved in the MPP and the TSGP projects.

This scandal, Lim noted, was previously discovered in the "red files."

Asked if the Malaysian delegation would discuss the ECRL as well, he said: "That will be one of the issues to be discussed."

"We are also going to do the same thing with Singapore. Economic Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Azmin Ali, Transport Minister Anthony Loke Siew Fook and myself are going there to talk to our Singapore counterparts regarding the High-Speed Rail (HSR) project, which will link the two countries.

"We believe that Singapore wants their neighbours to succeed because if they have successful neighbours, I am sure that they also bring benefits to the republic and it has also been our close neighbour for a long time.

"As friends you want to prosper thy neighbour. So, we believe Singapore wants to see us."

Among the first things that Dr Mahathir announced when forming the new government was to scrap the HSR project.

"It's not beneficial, it's going to cost us a huge sum of money. We will make no money at all from the operation. It is just a short track," the Prime Minister had said recently.

Asked about the compensation that needed to be paid, Dr Mahathir said he "supposed" it would be RM500 million.

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