

U E358 AAE
MAHATHIR - SUHARTO

KUALA LUMPUR, JUNE 4, (BERNAMA) -- PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SEES A GOLDEN TRIANGLE OF TOURISM EMERGING FROM THE PROPOSED JOINT DEVELOPMENT ZONE BETWEEN JOHOR, SINGAPORE AND INDONESIA'S BATAM ISLAND.

HE SAID PROMOTING TOURISM IN THIS AREA WAS ONE OF THE ISSUES DISCUSSED IN HIS 90-MINUTE MEETING WITH INDONESIAN PRESIDENT SUHARTO HERE TODAY.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR AND PRESIDENT SUHARTO HAD A +FOUR-EYE+ MEETING WHICH WAS FOLLOWED BY AN HOUR-LONG DELEGATION MEETING BETWEEN BOTH SIDES. PRESIDENT SUHARTO WAS HERE TO ATTEND THE G-15 SUMMIT WHICH ENDED YESTERDAY.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THEY AGREED THAT THE GOLDEN TRIANGLE CONCEPT WOULD FACILITATE GROWTH IN ALL THREE COUNTRIES PARTICULARLY IN TOURISM.

+WE CAN BENEFIT FROM THE PROSPERITY AND SPENDING POWER OF SINGAPORE AND THE SPILLOVER EFFECT OF ITS TOURISM INDUSTRY,+ HE TOLD A NEWS CONFERENCE LATER. -- MORE

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SINGAPORE, HE ADDED, WOULD ALSO BENEFIT FROM THIS BECAUSE TOURISM STATISTICS SHOWED THAT MOST TOURISTS DID NOT ONLY VISIT SINGAPORE BUT HAD ALSO PLANNED VISITS TO NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES.

SINGAPORE FIRST DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER GOH CHOK TONG PROPOSED IN JANUARY THE GOLDEN TRIANGLE CONCEPT TO DEVELOP THE AREA INTO AN ECONOMIC ZONE IN THE 1990S.

HE SAID BATAM, WHICH IS LOCATED 20KM FROM SINGAPORE, AND JOHOR COULD PROVIDE LAND, GAS, WATER AND LABOUR FOR INDUSTRIES WHILE SINGAPORE WOULD PROVIDE MANAGEMENT EXPERTISE.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID HE AND PRESIDENT SUHARTO ALSO DISCUSSED INDONESIA'S PLAN TO SUPPLY WATER TO SINGAPORE FROM BATAM ISLAND, ADDING THAT THIS WOULD NOT AFFECT JOHOR'S NORMAL SUPPLY OF WATER TO SINGAPORE.

ASKED WHETHER THE TRIANGLE ZONE WOULD TAKE THE FORM OF THE JOINT DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY ALONG THE LINES OF THE RECENTLY AGREED AREA BETWEEN MALAYSIA AND THAILAND, HE SAID: +THE GOVERNMENT OF JOHOR IS TALKING OF THIS...WE HOPE SOMETHING COMES UP.+ -- MORE

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THE PRIME MINISTER ALSO SAID THAT MALAYSIA WOULD HELP PROMOTE VISIT INDONESIA YEAR TOURISM PROGRAMMES NEXT YEAR BY ENCOURAGING MORE VISITS TO THE REPUBLIC.

FOR THIS, HE SAID, MALAYSIA FELT THAT THERE SHOULD BE MORE FLIGHTS BETWEEN KUALA LUMPUR AND JAKARTA.

+MALAYSIA WILL HELP THEM IN THEIR PROGRAMMES AND THEY ALSO WILL DO LIKEWISE FOR VISIT MALAYSIA YEAR 1990,+ HE SAID. MALAYSIA AND INDONESIA SIGNED A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING IN FEBRUARY TO PROMOTE JOINT TOURISM.

ISSUES DISCUSSED TODAY INCLUDE INTERNATIONAL AND BILATERAL MATTERS SUCH AS SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION AND THE DELINEATION LINE BETWEEN THE TWO NATIONS IN KALIMANTAN AND THE STRAITS OF MELAKA.

HE SAID INDONESIA AND MALAYSIA, WHO ARE BOTH EXPORTERS OF NATURAL RESOURCES SUCH AS COCOA, PALM OIL AND PETROLEUM, HAD ALSO AGREED TO EXCHANGE INFORMATION ON MARKETING STRATEGIES FOR SUCH COMMODITIES. -- MORE

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TO A QUESTION, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR DENIED THAT MALAYSIA AND INDONESIA, ALTHOUGH COMPETITORS, WERE UNDERCUTTING EACH OTHER ON PALM OIL EXPORT SALES.

+THE MARKET IS VERY BIG BUT WHAT IS IMPORTANT IS THAT WE DO NOT COMPETE TO THE POINT OF DOING DAMAGE TO OURSELVES,+ HE SAID.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THE EDIBLE OILS MARKET WAS TARGETED TO BE AROUND 90 MILLION TONNES BY THE YEAR 2000 AND INDONESIA MIGHT OVERTAKE MALAYSIA AS A MAJOR PALM OIL EXPORTER BY THEN.

HE ADDED THAT CURRENTLY THE PRICE OF INDONESIA'S PALM OIL WAS LOW BECAUSE IT WAS MAINLY FOR DOMESTIC CONSUMPTION AND NOT FOR EXPORT.

TO ANOTHER QUESTION, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THE VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE ISSUE WAS NOT RAISED IN HIS MEETING WITH PRESIDENT SUHARTO. +I DON'T THINK THAT THIS IS A MAJOR PROBLEM.+ -- MORE
1542MST 04 06 90

D659

U E363 AAE
MAHATHIR - SUHARTO 5 KUALA LUMPUR

THE PRIME MINISTER DENIED THAT MALAYSIA WAS PUSHING AWAY THE VIETNAMESE. +OF COURSE WE ARE PERSUADING THEM TO GO AWAY ... TO GO BACK TO THEIR OWN COUNTRY. WE ARE NOT PUSHING OFF PEOPLE.+

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR DESCRIBED ACCUSATIONS OF MALAYSIA PUSHING AWAY VIETNAMESE BOAT ARRIVALS AS BEING +VERY ODD.+

THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES AND SEVERAL WESTERN COUNTRIES HAVE ACCUSED MALAYSIA OF PUSHING AWAY THE BOAT PEOPLE WHO LATER ARRIVE ON INDONESIA'S GALANG ISLAND.

+THE PEOPLE WHO ACCUSE US OF PUSHING AWAY THE REFUGEES ARE EVEN NOW PUSHING OFF REFUGEES WHO ARE COMING INTO THEIR COUNTRY. (THEY ARE) PUSHING THEM INTO THE SEA, ACROSS THE RIVER.+

+SO WHY SHOULD THIS BE VERY STRANGE,+ HE SAID. +WE ARE NOT KILLING PEOPLE.+ -- BERNAMA