

New thriving, economic zone in the north seen

By AZAM ARBI 31 AUG 1991

THE Northern Growth Triangle encompassing Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia is expected to create another thriving economic zone similar to the one in the south which comprises Johor, Singapore and Indonesia's Batam island.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the main objective of the northern triangle is to coordinate economic growth so that development can be expedited in the area.

A tri-government cooperation proposal, the northern triangle will cover 14 provinces in southern Thailand, four states in Malaysia — Perlis, Kedah, Penang and Perak and Indonesia's Northern Sumatra region.

"We are still in the discussion stage and are trying to determine how best we can execute the cooperation within the triangle. Economic matters will be the main area of cooperation," he told reporters after launching commemorative stamps of former Malaysian prime ministers in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

He said the proposal will not involve the creation of a free trade zone. It is primarily aimed at coordinating the three governments' economic development efforts.

Former Finance Minister Tun Daim Zainuddin has been appointed to oversee matters pertaining to the northern triangle. The post will be accorded a ministerial status.

Referring to his trip to Mexico in September, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said it is a continuation of his visit to South America in July — where he toured Chile, Argentina and Brazil.

Topics to be discussed will include trade and economic cooperation.

"I will be going there on the invitation of the President (Carlos Salinas de Gortari). We will also discuss the North America Free Trade Area (Nafta).

"Malaysia wants to know what it is all about and the economic relations between Nafta and other countries," Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said.

From Mexico, the Prime Minister will go to New York where he will be addressing the United Nations General Assembly.

Earlier, the Prime Minister paid tribute to Malaysia's former prime ministers — the late Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Hajj, the late Tun Abdul Razak and the late Tun Hussein Onn — whose leadership and sacrifices, he said.

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should be appreciated by the people of this country.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir added that the former premiers were recognised as highly nationalistic and respected statesmen who were unwavering in their efforts to develop the country, create harmony and boost Malaysia's image in the international arena.

The late Tunku Abdul Rahman, Malaysia's Father of Independence, freed the country from colonial rule.

The late Tun Abdul Razak, the Father of Development, was re-

cognised for his contribution towards upgrading the infrastructure and the standard of living of the rural people and the late Tun Hussein, the Father of Unity, for his unwavering quest to create a harmonious multi-racial society.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said the foundations laid by them would enable the nation to achieve the desired progress and development.

The three stamps, each bearing a portrait of the former prime ministers, are in \$1 denominations.