

PM: We value peaceful ties

PETALING JAYA, Thurs. — Malaysia has consistently followed a policy of reciprocal co-operation and it values peaceful relations with its neighbours towards regional political and economic stability, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

The Prime Minister said Asean countries and Vietnam have ushered in a new era of regional co-operation and economic participation.

In this context, the Vietnamese decision to acquiesce to the Treaty of Amity and Co-operation on South-

east Asia was an important milestone, he said in his message in the *Second International Symposium on Interaction for Progress — Modernisation of Vietnam and Asean Co-operation* souvenir programme.

Dr Mahathir said the last Asean summit established the guidelines for Asean's co-operation with Vietnam and with the rest of Southeast Asia aimed at advancing regional integration.

If a significant contribution is to be made towards Asean-Vietnam relations,

the implementation of these agreed guidelines are essential, he said.

"This can be made possible through a continuing dialogue between representatives of public and private sectors from the Asean region and Vietnam," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that by sharing experiences, the symposium would provide further impetus to improved Asean-Vietnam relations.

In his message, Vo Van Kiet, Vietnam's chairman of the Council of Ministers,

said the great and far-reaching changes in the region was reflected in the theme of the symposium.

It also reflected the desire and resolution of the Governments and peoples in Southeast Asia to forget the past and strive to build up the region into a zone of peace, friendship, co-operation and development.

This in turn provides nations the opportunity to jointly take part in dynamic and strong relations on the basis of mutual respect and benefit, he said.