

PM: Neighbours should help each other prosper

By K.P. Waran

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. — As Southeast Asia is becoming stable and experiencing active growth, countries in the region should help one another prosper, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister said this was Malaysia's approach towards its neighbours for the simple reason that the country had a stake in the stability and prosperity of all its neighbours.

Speaking at a luncheon held in honour of Cambodian King Norodom Sihanouk at Carcosa Seri Negara here, he hoped that Cambodia, which recently became an observer in Asean, would become a full member in the

"not too distant future".

"Cambodia's membership of Asean will help make for a stable, prosperous and united Southeast Asia."

He said Malaysia was keen to collaborate with and be of assistance to Cambodia in its development, and its private sector was encouraged to play a positive role in Cambodia's reconstruction and development.

He said the Malaysian private sector had contributed a lot towards making Malaysia what it was today.

He added that Cambodia considered Malaysia's development a worthy model, and that the Malaysian Government felt the private sector could do the same for Phnom Penh.

Having entered the world

arena as leader of the Cambodian people over 50 years ago, at a time when this part of the world was a collection of colonies, Dr Mahathir said that Sihanouk's dedication and sacrifice for his country continued to this day, leading to the restoration of peace in Cambodia and the region.

He said this would not have been possible without Sihanouk's momentous efforts and vision for a peaceful Southeast Asia.

Sihanouk, in his address, said Malaysia was the only Asean country to accredit an Ambassador to Cambodia in the 1980s during the time when the independence and the very existence of Cambodia was in great danger.

"It was a noble gesture that shall forever remain inscribed in my heart," he said.

Acknowledging Malaysia's substantial role in the negotiations leading to the Paris Agreements on Cambodia in 1991, he said Malaysia also played a part in the implementation of the agreements between 1992 and 1993 by providing a large Malaysian contingent to the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia.

He said Malaysia, under the leadership of Dr Mahathir, had played a leading role in the search for a peaceful settlement in Cambodia and had supported him (Sihanouk) in times of conflict.

He expressed his Govern-

ment's deepest gratitude to Malaysia for playing a very important role in the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Cambodia.

Following the democratic elections in Cambodia in May 1993, he said, the links binding the leaders of the new Cambodia and Malaysia had been strengthened.

"Queen Monineath and I have, for many years, been enthusiastic admirers of Dr Mahathir's economic, social and national development policies which have made Malaysia one of the region's financial and economic centres and have given the Malaysian people a high standard of living," he said, extending Cambodia's congratulations.