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Summit-Abdullah

ABDULLAH HAS FIRST MEETING WITH THAILAND'S NEW FOREIGN MINISTER

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 15 (Bernama) -- Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi held a 40-minute meeting with his Thai counterpart Dr Surin Pitsuwan here during which they followed-up on the decisions made by their respective heads of government at the Asean informal summit here

Speaking to reporters after the meeting, Abdullah said this was his first meeting with Pitsuwan since his appointment as Thailand's new foreign minister last month.

"We took the advantage (of the meeting) to follow-up on the decisions made by our two leaders with particular reference to the Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT)," he said.

Pitsuwan is accompanying his Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai who is attending the second Asean Informal Summit at the Palace of the Golden Horses hotel here.

Abdullah said they also agreed to follow-up with discussions relating to the Malaysia-Thailand border at the next meeting of the Malaysia-Thailand Joint Commission in March.

Abdullah said they also took some time to go through yesterday's discussion between Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Leekpai on the currency issue.

"So what I want to say is please accept Thailand's clarification," he said, obviously referring to a press statement issued today by the Secretariat of the Prime Minister of Thailand denying a newspaper report quoting Leekpai as saying that the International Monetary Fund's assistance to Thailand "has not borne any significant result and was too late to rejuvenate the Thai economy."

Asked how important was the summit in restoring confidence in the (currency) market, he said: "You have to wait for the outcome of the whole summit but of course we review this as an important meeting."

On whether this meeting would bring any result, Abdullah said: "Why not...".

According to the press statement, Leekpai and Dr Mahathir had reviewed the general financial situation in the region.

Leekpai had also agreed with Dr Mahathir that the IMF study currently being undertaken on the structure of the global financial market and short term capital flows should be speeded up and made available before its scheduled release in May next year. -- BERNAMA

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