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Mahathir-Fund

MAHATHIR WELCOMES PROPOSAL OF SPECIAL ASEAN FUND

KUALA LUMPUR, March 3 (Bernama) -- A fund to help Asean countries faced with financial problem should be set up for use in time of need, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today.

He welcomed the proposal of the inaugural meeting of the Asean Finance Ministers in Phuket, Thailand last Saturday to introduce a financial assistance scheme to help member countries faced with financial crisis.

"I think it's a good idea. We don't want any Asean country to face financial problem.

"If we could have a fund to help in time of emergency, we should do it," he told reporters after launching a national tree-planting campaign at Medan Idaman Recreational Park, in Jalan Gombak, here.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, who is also Finance Minister, had said after the meeting that the finance ministers had agreed to set up a fund for the purpose but the final decision would be up to Asean heads of government.

On the coming meeting in Tokyo involving the United States and five other countries including Australia, Dr Mahathir said Malaysia had no right to say anything if the United States wanted to consider Australia as an Asian country.

"America considers Australia as Asian that is their right but they can also consider us as Europeans ... invite us also when there is an European meeting," he said. -- BERNAMA

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