

09 APR 1997

Mahathir-Cooperation

MALAYSIA TO PROPOSE ASEAN-GCC COOPERATION

By: Abdul Rahman Ahmad

MANAMA, April 9 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said Malaysia will discuss with its Asean partners a proposal to foster some kind of relations with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

The prime minister said the GCC was becoming an important regional grouping of late due to the increasing trade among its members or with other countries.

If Asean could form some kind of cooperation with other regional groupings, there was no reason why it could not form similar relations with the GCC, he told a news conference, here, at the end of his six-day visit which earlier took him to Kuwait.

While in the two Gulf states, Dr Mahathir was conferred the highest awards by the governments of the two countries.

Kuwait conferred Dr Mahathir the Mubarak Al-Kabir award while Bahrain, with a population of 565,000 and an income derived from oil production and tourism, conferred the Ahmad Al-Fatah award on him for his efforts in improving the brotherhood.

Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are members of the GCC which produces 18 per cent of the global crude supplies.

Dr Mahathir said Asean had proposed to form some kind of cooperation with the Southern African Development Community countries and the Indian Ocean Rim countries.

He said Asean had been working with many regional groupings as well as individual countries besides having countries like Japan, South Korea, India, the European Union, Australia and New Zealand as dialogue partners.

He said Asean constantly kept in touch with its dialogue partners and regional groupings to enable Asean to adjust to their needs and for them to be more flexible in dealing with Asean member countries. -- BERNAMA

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