

17 DEC 1998

Mahathir-Asean

MAHATHIR SAYS ASEAN SUMMIT IS BETTER THAN APEC

By: Abdul Muin Abdul Majid

HANOI, Dec 17 (Bernama) -- Describing the just-concluded Sixth Asean Summit here as better than last month's APEC meeting in Kuala Lumpur, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad expressed satisfaction with the outcome of the Hanoi summit which discussed positive and practical matters that everyone could carry out.

"In a way, it's even better than the APEC meeting in term of decision making and the possibility of following-up," he told a news conference before leaving the Vietnamese capital after attending the two-day summit which ended yesterday.

When asked whether measures adopted at the Asean summit here were adequate to pull the region out of its economic woes, Dr Mahathir said he did not know whether they were adequate or not but a lot of progress had been made.

"And certainly there are new implementable ideas which have been proposed and we think that from now on it's going to be a very busy time for Asean," he said.

Dr Mahathir also said the three Asean dialogue partners -- China, South Korea and Japan -- seemed to believe that there should be greater cooperation between North East Asia and South East Asia.

The three countries also attended the summit for dialogue with Asean leaders.

When asked why the meeting between Asean and the three dialogue partners was not called the East Asia Economic Caucus (EAEC), Dr Mahathir said: "You can call it what ever you like but the main thing is we get together."

Both sides also believed that they should meet on a very regularly basis involving all levels like senior officials, intellectuals, experts and ministers, the prime minister added.

-- BERNAMA

MAM rn