

Ramos: Let's keep building stronger ties

Star 14 SEP 1999

KUALA LUMPUR: The Philippines and Malaysia must continue to strengthen and expand their bilateral relations and should never be satisfied with the status quo, former Filipino president Fidel Ramos said.

"He said one of the immediate programmes both countries should undertake was the renewal and expansion of the BIMP-EAGA (Brunei-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East Asean Growth Area).

Ramos said that activities in the BIMP-EAGA had slowed down due to the economic turmoil, but should be renewed since it was a common market for some 45 million people.

"With complementation happening all around, the Philippines feels that these activities must be reinforced with the economic recovery which is rising in South-East Asia," he said.

He added that the economic group was initiated in 1993 on the sugges-

tion of the Philippines.

The chairman of the Ramos Peace and Development Foundation was speaking to reporters yesterday after a 30-minute meeting with Information Minister Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob at the latter's office, here.

Ramos said the basic purpose of his visit was to help, as a former president, to promote stronger bilateral relations with Malaysia especially in the fields of economic development, investment, trade, education, tourism, and cultural exchanges.

He said he would discuss the matter with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad tomorrow.

"During my time as president (economic) ties were especially strong because of so many joint-projects in tourism development, automotive manufacturing, power generation, and environmental protection," he said.