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FORUM-ASEAN

MAHATHIR: ASEAN MARKET CAN BE AS STRONG AS CHINA'S

PUTRAJAYA, Oct 6 (Bernama) -- Asean's market can be as strong as that of China since the South East Asian region has a population of 500 million, about half that of China, said prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad tonight.

"If we work hard enough, we can become a very great market. We can produce a lot of goods for ourselves and for the rest of the world and we will be able to match that of China," he told a question and answer session after delivering a keynote address at a dinner reception in conjunction with the World Economic Forum's East Asia Economic Summit. The three-day Summit began in Kuala Lumpur today.

Dr Mahathir also said he was quite sure that China would want to sell its goods to South East Asia as much as South East Asia would like to sell its goods to China.

He was confident that Japan and South Korea would co-operate with Asean and work together under the Asean Plus Three (Asean+3) banner.

Asean+3 was actually the EAEC (East Asia Economic Caucus) by another name, he said. -- BERNAMA

AFY SHY