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PM: Asean must work with East Asian partners

INITIATIVES: Cooperation with China, Japan and S. Korea ensures peace and prosperity, says Najib

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ASEAN must ensure that the momentum of cooperation with its partners in East Asia is maintained through initiatives, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said yesterday.

He said cooperation with the three partners, namely China, Japan and South Korea, was a driving force towards greater regional integration.

"It serves as the main vehicle towards a long-term goal of building the East Asia Community. I am confident that the Asean Plus Three cooperation has much more to contribute towards building peace and bringing prosperity to the region," Najib said in his opening remarks at the 18th Asean Plus Three Summit here yesterday.

Present were Chinese Premier Li Keqiang, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and South Korean President Park Geun-hye.

Najib said 10 years ago, the East Asia vision group had presented its report on ways to ex-

pand and intensify cooperation to facilitate development of the East Asia region.

"We have appointed a second group to review the Asean Plus Three cooperation and provide future direction.

"We must ensure the momentum of cooperation is maintained as this will contribute positively to the livelihood of the people in Asean and the East Asia region."

He said this year marked a milestone for Asean with the establishment of the Asean Community by year-end.

"Complementing the Asean Community's building efforts are the support, collaboration and contribution by our dialogue partners, China, Korea and Japan."

The 18th Asean Plus Three Summit was held alongside the 27th Asean Summit and Related

Summits, which end tomorrow.

It functions as a coordinator of cooperation among Asean and China, Japan and South Korea to consult on a range of issues. Bernama

