

US-North Korea Summit will help lessen tension - Dr Mahathir

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From Abdul Muin Majid

TOKYO, June 11 (Bernama) -- Malaysia feels that Tuesday's summit between the leaders of North Korea and the United States will help lessen tension in this part of the world, said Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

The Malaysian prime minister said it would also contribute towards improving relations between the countries of East Asia such as Japan, China as well as North and South Korea,

"We welcome the opportunity for the west to meet with the leader of North Korea. Any opportunity to meet would be something that would be good for the world. It is far better than confrontation," he said at a dialogue session organised by Japan National Press Club here Monday. Dr Mahathir is on a two-day working visit to Japan.

The 'nuclear peace' summit between US President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un is aimed, among others, at seeing North Korea 'denuclearise' its nuclear programme in return for economic freedom and security guarantees.

Dr Mahathir noted that there were people who felt that the North Korean leader was not really genuine, professing scepticism over his radical change in attitude.

"Whether it is radical or not, it's an opportunity to have contact and all contacts between people who are in conflict with each other is something that we should all welcome," said Dr Mahathir who had earlier attended the 24th International Conference on the Future of Asia, or Nikkei Conference, in the Japanese capital.

The 'nuclear peace' summit will be held at Capella Hotel on Singapore's Sentosa Island.

At the Nikkei Conference, Dr Mahathir said neither the US nor China should make Southeast Asia an area for contest between the two great powers

"We want to have less number of warships in Southeast Asia - in South China Sea as well as in the Strait of Melaka. We've been looking after this area before, there was no problem," he said.

Dr Mahathir explained that having less warships in these waterways would mean less competition and less tension.

"The idea of discussing and solving problems through dialogue and negotiation would be a much more fruitful (way to resolve differences)," he said.

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