

ASEAN - PRODUCTS

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SINGAPORE, APRIL 22 (BERNAMA) — ASEAN ECONOMIC MINISTERS HAVE APPROVED THE INCLUSION OF ALL PRODUCTS WITH IMPORT VALUE OF LESS THAN US\$50,000 IN THE ASEAN PREFERENTIAL TRADING ARRANGEMENT (PTA).

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER (DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD) SAID TODAY THAT PRODUCTS FALLING INTO THIS CATEGORY WOULD BE ACCORDED AT ACROSS THE BOARD TARIFF CUTS OF 20 PER CENT.

HOWEVER, ACCORDING TO HIM SOME COUNTRIES HAD EXPRESSED RESERVATIONS ON SOME ITEMS AND DETAILS OF THE UNDERSTANDING WHICH WOULD BE ANNOUNCED TOMORROW WHEN THE MINISTERS WERE EXPECTED TO WIND UP THEIR NINTH MEETING.

ASKED IF THIS AMOUNTED TO DISAGREEMENT, DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR WHO IS ALSO THE TRADE AND INDUSTRY MINISTER SAID SOME PRODUCTS FALLING INTO THIS CATEGORY DID NOT ATTRACT ANY TARIFF IN SOME OF THE ASEAN COUNTRIES.

ON CIVIL AVIATION, HE SAID THE MINISTERS ENDORSED THE STAND TAKEN BY THE ASEAN COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS (COTAC) IN NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE UNITED KINGDOM ON THE AUSTRALIA-ASEAN-UNITED KINGDOM LOW FARE SCHEME. — BERNAMA MORE 2056/HS  
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DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID THAT NEGOTIATIONS WOULD NOW SHIFT TO THE UNITED KINGDOM BECAUSE ASEAN HAD ALREADY RESOLVED PROBLEMS WITH AUSTRALIA.

THE COTAC TODAY REPORTED THE OUTCOME OF ITS FIRST ROUND OF TALKS WITH THE UNITED KINGDOM TO THE ECONOMIC MINISTERS.

OFFICIALS DESCRIBED THE NEGOTIATIONS WITH UNITED KINGDOM FROM MARCH 10 TO 14 AS INCONCLUSIVE BUT NEVERTHELESS USEFUL BECAUSE IT GAVE ASEAN AVIATION OFFICIALS AN INSIGHT IN THE UNITED KINGDOM THINKING ON THE SUBJECT. +

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID THE ECONOMIC MINISTERS WOULD TAKE UP THE ASEAN INDUSTRIAL COMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMME AND THE ASEAN INDUSTRIAL PROJECTS IN THEIR TALKS TOMORROW. — BERNAMA MORE 2100/HS  
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DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR LATER HELD TALKS WITH SINGAPORE PRIME MINISTER LEE KUAN YEW STRETCHING OVER ONE AND A HALF HOURS AT ENCIK LEE'S OFFICE.

NO DETAILS OF THEIR DISCUSSIONS WERE IMMEDIATELY AVAILABLE.

A MALAYSIAN DELEGATION SPOKESMAN SAID THAT DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR AND ENCIK LEE MET IN PRIVATE AND NO OFFICIALS WERE PRESENT. — BERNAMA 2103/HS