

MAHATHIR-FIJI

BY IDZAN ISMAIL

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KUALA LUMPUR, OCT. 11 (BERNAMA)-- REGIONAL AND POLITICAL ISSUES AFFECTING THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION WILL FEATURE PROMINENTLY IN THE COMMONWEALTH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT REGIONAL MEETING (CHOGRM) WHICH OPENS IN SUVA, FIJI ON THURSDAY.

THE 17 COMMONWEALTH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT FROM THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION ATTENDING THE MEETING ARE EXPECTED TO ASSESS THEIR COOPERATION IN TRADE, ENERGY, INDUSTRY AND AGRICULTURE.

WISMA PUTRA SOURCES SAID THE AGENDA OF THE FIVE DAY CONFERENCE WOULD BE BROADLY DIVIDED INTO THREE MAIN ITEMS: WORLD AND REGIONAL POLITICAL TRENDS, INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ISSUES AND REGIONAL AND FUNCTIONAL COOPERATION.

ON THE WORLD POLITICAL TRENDS, THE DOMINANT ISSUES EXPECTED TO BE RAISED ARE THE KAMPUCHEAN PROBLEM, THE SITUATION IN WEST ASIA AND THE NAMIBIAN ISSUE.

MALAYSIA IS ANTICIPATED TO TAKE A HIGH PROFILE ON THE KAMPUCHEAN ISSUE AND WILL EXPRESS ITS DISAPPOINTMENT WITH INDIA WHICH HAS REPEATEDLY MADE STATEMENTS SUPPORTING THE HENG SAMRIN REGIME IN KAMPUCHEA. --MORE 1519/OM

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MALAYSIA, WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF ANOTHER ASEAN MEMBER COUNTRY SINGAPORE, IS EXPECTED TO LOBBY FOR FULL SUPPORT FOR THE NEWLY-FORMED COALITION GOVERNMENT OF DEMOCRATIC KAMPUCHEA.

AT THE LAST CHOGRM MEETING IN NEW DELHI IN 1980, THE HEADS OF GOVERNMENT HAD CALLED FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF FOREIGN FORCES FROM THAT COUNTRY AND STRESSED THE NEED TO CREATE A CLIMATE OF PEACE AND SECURITY IN KAMPUCHEA WHICH WOULD ENABLE ITS PEOPLE TO DETERMINE THEIR DESTINY FREE FROM OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE.

IT IS UNDERSTOOD THAT PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD, ATTENDING THE CHOGRM FOR THE FIRST TIME, WILL ACT AS LEAD SPEAKER ON REGIONAL AND FUNCTIONAL COOPERATION.

HE IS EXPECTED TO TOUCH ON THE COMMODITIES ISSUE, PROTECTIONISM, GLOBAL NEGOTIATIONS AND FINANCIAL MATTERS IN HIS MAIDEN ADDRESS.

IN VIEW OF THE INCREASING PROTECTIONISM AMONG DEVELOPED INDUSTRIALISED COUNTRIES, MALAYSIA WILL BE STRONGLY ADVOCATING CLOSER COOPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES TO OVERCOME THE COMMON PROBLEM.

THIS INCLUDE THE DEVELOPMENT AND EXPANSION OF TRADE, INVESTMENT AND INDUSTRIAL COOPERATION. -- MORE 1629/ZCM

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MALAYSIA LONG REGARDED AS THE MOST DEVELOPED OF THE DEVELOPING NATIONS COULD ASSIST OTHERS LOWER DOWN THE DEVELOPMENT LADDER AND IN VIEW OF THIS, DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR IS EXPECTED TO STRESS ON THE SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION ESPECIALLY WITH THE SOUTH PACIFIC COUNTRIES.

DAUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR'S WILLINGNESS TO ATTEND THE FIJIAN MEETING IS CLEAR PROOF OF THE MAUNTRY'S DESIRE TO INTENSIFY COOPERATION WITH DEVELOPING AND SMALL ISLAND COUNTRIES IN PARTICULAR.

IN THE CHORGM 1980 MEETING, THE THEN PRIME MINISTER TUN HUSSEIN ON HAD INTRODUCED THE MALAYSIAN TECHNICAL AID PROGRAMME AND UP TILL NOW, SEVERAL SOUTH PACIFIC COUNTRIES -FIJI, WESTERN SAMOA, PAPUA NEW GUINEA, TONGA, KIRIBATI AND THE COOK ISLANDS-HAVE BENEFITTED FROM THE PROGRAMME.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR DID NOT ATTEND THE LAST COMMONWEALTH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT SUMMIT IN MELBOURNE LAST YEAR, CITING DOMESTIC COMMITMENTS.

HE HAD IN THE PAST MADE SEVERAL STATEMENTS DOWNGRADING THE MOVEMENT'S IMPORTANCE SAYING THAT LARGE GATHERINGS LIKE THE SUMMIT HAD YIELDED FEW RESULTS. --MORE 1528/OM

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+I AM TIRED OF TOO MUCH TALK BUT LITTLE RESULTS FROM PAST COMMONWEALTH MEETINGS,+ HE WAS QUOTED AS SAYING.

THE GOVERNMENT HAD ALSO MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE COMMONWEALTH WAS STILL WORTH PRESERVING BUT STRESSED THAT DISCUSSIONS OF PROBLEMS AMONG LEADERS OF THE COMMONWEALTH SHOULD BE FOLLOWED BY POSITIVE ACTION.

+IT IS NOT SUFFICIENT THAT THE COMMONWEALTH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT TALK TO EACH OTHER...THEIR DISCUSSIONS SHOULD BE FOLLOWED BY POSITIVE ACTION.+

HIS SPEECH AT THE COMING MEETING WOULD DEFINITELY DRIVE HOME THE POINT OF MAKING THE CHORGM A BODY TO BE RECKONED WITH, ACCORDING TO OBSERVERS.

THE FIJI MEETING, APART FROM REVIEWING PAST PROGRESS IN SELECTED SECTORS, WOULD ALSO AGREE ON THE GUIDELINES FOR FUTURE ACTIVITIES.

AS THIS IS THE FIRST MEETING TO BE HELD IN A SOUTH PACIFIC COUNTRY, ISSUES ON DECOLONISATION, NUCLEAR TESTS, LAW OF THE SEA AND FISHERIES ARE LIKELY TO BE BROUGHT UP. --MORE 1522/MD

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A COMMON THEME RUNNING THROUGH THE RENEWED INTERNATIONAL INTEREST IN THE ISLANDS IS THE OCEAN DIMENSION - THE FISH, THE UNDERSEA MINERALS AND STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS.

THE LURE OF THE OCEAN RESOURCES HAS MADE THE GREAT AND NOT SO GREAT POWERS WILLING TO LISTEN TO CALLS FOR INCREASED GRANTS IN AID, INVESTMENT AND PERHAPS EVEN ACCESS TO PROTECTED MARKETS.

AMERICAN INTEREST IN THE ISLANDS HAS BEEN REACTIVATED BY STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS, JAPAN WANTS FISH AND OTHER ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES WHILE THE RUSSIANS HAVE STIMULATED A RENEWED FLURRY OF INTERNATIONAL INTEREST IN THE ISLANDS IN 1976. BY TRYING TO ASIA A Foothold IN TONGA.

THE QUESTION OF ILLICIT DRUGS WOULD BE RAISED BY MALAYSIA AS THE CONVENOR OF THE WORKING GROUP ON ILLICIT DRUGS.

THE CHOERM, BESIDES PROVIDING A FORUM FOR LEADERS TO EXCHANGE VIEWS ON POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS, IS AIMED AT STRENGTHENING COLLABORATION AMONG COMMONWEALTH COUNTRIES IN THE REGION.

MALAYSIA'S NINE-MEMBER DELEGATION TO THE MEETING, WHICH INCLUDES FOREIGN MINISTER TAN SRI GHAZALI SHAFIE, WILL LEAVE TOMORROW NIGHT FOR SUVA. --MORE 1532/MD

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THE OPENING CEREMONY WILL BE HELD IN THURSDAY MORNING AT THE NATIONAL GYMNASIUM WHILE THE SESSIONS WILL BE HELD AT THE GRAND PACIFIC HOTEL.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR WILL HOST A LUNCHEON FOR THE HEADS OF DELEGATIONS ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE MEETING.

TO ENCOURAGE INTIMACY AND FRANK TALK, THE MINI SUMMIT INCLUDES A BREAKAWAY WEEKEND WHEN THE LEADERS MOVE TO A SECLUDED RETREAT FOR PRIVATE DISCUSSIONS WITHOUT THEIR AIDES OR MINISTERIAL ADVISERS.

THE CHOICE FOR THE RETREAT IS THE PACIFIC HARBOUR- A TOURIST RESORT 40 KM FROM SUVA.

THE RETREAT IS A TRADITIONAL EVENT WHERE THE LEADERS HAMMER OUT SOME OF THE PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED BEFORE COMING OUT WITH A COMMUNIQUE AT THE CLOSE OF THE MEETING THE NEXT DAY. --BERNAMA 1540/MD