

Bilateral ties will be focus of Mahathir-Suharto talks

By AHIRUDIN ATTAN

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said his meeting with President Suharto in Jakarta this Friday will focus on bilateral issues.

Over the weekend, he will also meet some of his Asean counterparts in Bali. Singapore Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong and Brunei's Sultan Hassanali Bolkhiah have confirmed participation in a conference on Asean and the world economy which opens on Sunday in the famous Javanese resort.

The Prime Minister told reporters after opening an artquarium in Kuala Lumpur yesterday that he will take up a few issues pertaining to bilateral ties during his annual consultative meeting with the Indonesian president. The two leaders last met in Kuala Lumpur

APR 27 FEB 1991

"We faced some difficulty in finding the right candidates, those who can deliver and meet the expectations of the council's objectives. We cannot appoint someone whose views are confined only to the interests of a specific group. We need people who can come up with ideas which complement the council's work and which will contribute to the nation's development.

"If we find suitable candidates among the workers in future, we will appoint them to the council. The door will be kept open," he said.

The Prime Minister added that it is not important whether such candidates come from the Congress of Unions of Employees in the Public and Civil Services (Cuepacs), the Malaysian Trades

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who is also Umno president, said he had an audience with the Yang di Pertuan Agong yesterday on the party's resolution on Rulers, adopted at the party's general assembly at the end of last year. He told reporters that the King was "receptive" to the explanation on why the resolution had to be adopted. Umno, the largest component in the Barisan Nasional coalition, passed the resolution calling for political neutrality on the part of the Rulers following incidences at last October's general election.

last year during the G-15 meeting.

But since some of the Asean leaders will be in Bali for the opening of the conference, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir expects some sort of an informal meeting among them to be convened to discuss current issues affecting Asean.

He said he may also hold bilateral talks with these leaders.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir will be accompanied by Foreign Minister Datuk Abu Hassan Omar during the Indonesian visit, which includes a scheduled trip to Batam Island in the heart of the economic growth triangle covering Johor, Singapore and Indonesia.

On the setting up of the Malaysian Business Council (MBC) which he chairs, the Prime Minister said the appointment of only one workers' representative on the council is due to the lack of suitable candidates.

Union Congress (MTUC) or the Malaysian Labour Organisation (MLO).

"Anyone appointed will serve the council in his personal capacity," he said.

The MBC, set up to strengthen public-private sector cooperation, has 62 members. MLO secretary-general K. Sanmugam is the only workers' representative.

K. Sanmugam, in a meeting with newsmen earlier yesterday, described his appointment as "an honour to Malaysian workers" and said he will serve the interest of workers in the council to the best of his ability.

MTUC president Zainal Rampak said, however, the MBC is no place for a trade union leader. "The proper platform for the workers' movement is the National Labour Advisory Council. We're quite happy not to be invited to sit in the MBC."