

# Dr M says no to Apec summit

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④ Trip Overseas

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TIRANA: Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will not attend the November meeting of the 15-member Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation in Seattle.

The Prime Minister said Malaysia always believed that Apec should not have any summit meeting as it would turn Apec into a formal economic trade group.

"Therefore, Malaysia will not attend," Dr Mahathir said at the end of his visit to Albania.

US President Bill Clinton said in Tokyo recently

he would attend the next Apec meeting and support a proposal that the meeting should become a leaders' meeting.

The United States and Australia wanted to upgrade the Apec ministerial meeting to a heads-of-government summit and include trade and investment on the agenda.

The Apec members are Australia, Brunei, Canada, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand and the United States.

Australia said a heads-

of-government meeting would give Apec the muscle to pursue free trade aims in the fast growing Pacific area.

On report of an agreement by the Group of Seven top economic powers on tariff cuts, Dr Mahathir said these were meaningless unless they were accords at the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) talks.

He said the G-7 agreement only concerned the big nations' own interests, not those of the world.