

# White House urges PM to attend Apec meet

By LIM HOCK CHYE

WASHINGTON: The Clinton administration hopes Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will attend the Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation (Apec) leaders' meeting because it believes he can contribute in shaping the future of the Pacific rim.

The administration wants to know Malaysia's vision for the region, especially its development and growth.

International Trade and Industry Minister Rafidah Aziz said yesterday the message was conveyed to her during three meetings with senior administration officials.

The officials are US Trade Representative Mickey Kantor, Secretary of Commerce Ronald Brown and Deputy State Secretary Dr Clifton Wharton.

Dr Mahathir was earlier reported to have said that he would not be attending the

meeting in Seattle scheduled on Nov 18 and 19.

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

The meeting will focus on trade liberalisation, open regionalism and the future of the Pacific rim.

It is estimated that trade among Apec members now ac-

counts for about 40 per cent of world commerce.

Rafidah said Kantor had expressed his satisfaction with Malaysia's market opening measures under the Uruguay Round negotiations.

The Clinton administration's top trade policy objectives this year are the early conclusion of the Uruguay Round and the expansion of regional and bilateral trade liberalisation, particularly with the EC, Japan and China.

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