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Mahathir-Apec

M'SIA WILL NOT SUFFER BY NOT ATTENDING APEC, SAYS MAHATHIR

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KUALA LUMPUR, Nov. 4 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today Malaysia would not suffer by his decision not to attend the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) meeting in Seattle later this month.

The Prime Minister said no major decisions would be made at the conference as it was supposed to be an informal summit.

Speaking to reporters after opening the UMNO General Assembly at the Putra World Trade Centre, he said he had not changed his mind about not attending the conference.

He said: "Well, I have not changed my mind. I will not be going... I don't think Malaysia will suffer.

"I still think that Apec should not be equated with the European Community or be made into any free trade arrangement. Instead, it should focus on projects which can be of benefit to its members particularly members which are developing." -- more

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To a question whether he was anti-West, Dr Mahathir said: "We are not against them. It is they who are against us."

He said events abroad indicated that there was increasing anti-Islam feelings in the West.

Asked how long he would continue to head UMNO, Dr Mahathir said it would depend on his health and also whether he was still needed by the people to lead them.

"We don't have any time limit. You can stand as many times as you care to stand. But it will be wrong for me not to take note of the feelings of the party members if they indicate that they are tired of you."

Dr Mahathir was also confident party unity would not suffer after the elections because all members would close ranks and remain united.

"UMNO today is much stronger than at any other time before," he said.

-- Bernama

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