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Apec-Ministers

APEC MINISTERIAL MEETING ENTERS FINAL DAY

By: Muin Abdul Majid

MANILA, Nov 23 (Bernama) -- The eighth Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) ministerial meeting entered its second and final day today after having adopted the Manila Action Plan for Apec (Mapa) yesterday.

Ministers from the 18 member economies are expected to address economic and technical cooperation, administrative and budgetary matters today.

Malaysia is represented at the meeting by International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz.

Apart from the Mapa, the ministers have approved collective trade and investment liberalisation and facilitation measures, membership issue and an Apec Business Traveller Card initially for Australia, the Philippines and South Korea.

The Mapa is a key document outlining measures to achieve Apec's goal of having an open and free trade area by 2010 for developed countries and 2020 for the developing ones.

The Apec ministers are also expected to have a dialogue with business leaders from the Asia Pacific region who are here to attend the three-day Apec Business Forum (ABF)

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is expected to arrive in Manila today for the Apec leaders' summit to be held at Subic Bay on Monday.

On his arrival here, he is expected to hold talks with Australian Prime Minister John Howard followed by a meeting with Philippine President Fidel Ramos.

Dr Mahathir will also be a keynote speaker at the closing of the ABF later in the day after which he will attend the launching of the Philippine-Malaysian Business Council together with Ramos. -- BERNAMA

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