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Downer

DOWNER TO ADDRESS KL CONVENTION

By: Neville D'Cruz

MELBOURNE, Oct 2 (Bernama) -- Several Australian politicians led by Foreign Minister Alexander Downer will be in Kuala Lumpur to address the Malaysian Australian University Alumni Convention from Oct 18 to 20.

With the theme "Malaysia-Australia Relations Beyond 2000", the convention is being organised by the Malaysia-Australia Foundation (MAF) in association with Australian University Alumni Associations of Malaysia.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will be the guest of honour at a dinner to be hosted by MAF on Oct 18 at the Legend Hotel, the Mall.

Downer will give the keynote address on "A new era in Malaysia-Australia Relations" on Oct 19 after a speech by MAF chairman and Sarawak Chief Minister Tan Sri Haji Abdul Taib Mahmud.

The Premier of Victoria, Jeff Kennett will speak at a special luncheon on Oct 19 to be followed later in the afternoon by the Australian Shadow Minister Laurie Brereton, who as Transport Minister in the Keating Labour Government was responsible for allowing Malaysia Airlines to increase its services to Australia.

The guest speaker at the convention gala dinner that night will be Australia's controversial Education Minister Senator Amanda Vanstone who has been under pressure over a Howard Government decision to slash funding to universities while increasing student fees.

Other speakers from Australia will include Professor Ross Garnaut of the Australian National University; Professor Malcolm Logan, vice-Chancellor, Monash University; Mr Paul McClintock, national president, Australia-Malaysia Business Council; Dr John Stocker, director of research and innovation, Pratt Industries, and Professor Fay Gale, Vice-Chancellor, University of Western Australia.

Among the Malaysian speakers will be Datuk Dr Kamal Salih, Datuk Lee Yee Cheong, Datuk A Kadir Jasin, Mike Krishna, Tan Sri Dr Omar Abdul Rahman, Ananda Krishnan, Datuk Effendi Norwawi, Tan Sri Dr Abu Bakar Suleiman and Tan Lei Cheng.

About 250 university officials and alumni from Australia as well as 750 Malaysian alumni are expected to attend the convention which will provide an opportunity for the participants to discuss Malaysia-Australia co-operation in commerce, trade, professional services and education.

The highlight of associated cultural events will be the performance of Mazat Cabaret by the Queensland Philharmonic Orchestra at the gala dinner.

-- BERNAMA NDC AAM