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STRONG FORCE OF MALAYSIAN BUSINESSMEN FOR MANILA DIALOGUE

By: Yong Soo Heong

MANILA, Nov 22 (Bernama) -- About 120 Malaysian businessmen will attend the three-day Manila Dialogue on Malaysia-Philippine partnership beginning here tomorrow, an official said today.

Michael Yeoh, executive director of Asian Strategy and Leadership Institute (ASLI), a joint organiser of the dialogue, said there was encouraging response to the dialogue aimed at promoting "a golden era of mutual prosperity in the 21st century."

He expected about 500 participants as Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad would launch the Philippine-Malaysian Business Council in conjunction with the dialogue after delivering a keynote address at the closing session of the Apec Business Forum (ABF).

Philippine president Fidel Ramos will also be present at the ceremony.

Yeoh told Bernama that the timing of the launch would focus attention on Malaysia besides the Philippines, host of this year's APEC meeting.

The dialogue proper, which would begin on Monday, was expected to forge closer bilateral ties between the two countries.

A number of key personalities from the Malaysian and Philippines public and private sectors would speak at the dialogue.

They include Tun Daim Zainuddin, the economic adviser to the Malaysian government; Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud, Sarawak chief minister; Datuk Yong Teck Lee, Sabah chief minister; Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz, Minister of International Trade and Industry; Dr Shafiq Sit Abdullah, group general manager, corporate planning Sime Darby Bhd and Tan Sri Ramon Navaratnam, vice president, Pacific Basin Economic Council (PBEC), Malaysia.

Among the issues to be discussed are "A New Era in Malaysia-Philippines Relationship," "The East Asean Growth Area (EAGA) -- New Opportunities for Business and Investments," "Investment prospects in Sabah, Sarawak and the southern Philippines," and "Opportunities for Business Collaboration and Joint Ventures in Malaysia and the Philippines." -- BERNAMA

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