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PM cancels official Canada visit but will make Apec summit trip

TAIPING, Thurs. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has cancelled his official visit to Canada scheduled for next week because of health reasons but will go to Vancouver for the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation leaders' summit on Nov 24.

Dr Mahathir said he hoped the two to three days he remained in the country, would help him recover from a cold.

"I was told the temperature there is below 28 degrees Celsius and if I were to visit Canada, I am afraid that I may aggravate my illness," he told reporters after opening the RM20 million Bukit Merah Laketown Water Theme Park this afternoon.

The Prime Minister was scheduled to make an official visit to Canada from Nov 19 to 22 before going for the Apec's fifth leaders' summit in Vancouver.

Asked whether there was a conspiracy to force Asian leaders to resign, Dr Mahathir said although this seemed to be the intention, it did not seem to be the plan.

"They seemed happy about what has happened to Thailand as it was reported in the Herald Tribune that Asian leaders were no longer talking about the 21st century being the Asian Century."

The report in the Herald Tribune, the Prime Minister added, also said that Asian leaders were not as good as they said they were and that Asian values were not as good as claimed.

To a question about the draft resolution of the 34 United States' Congressmen and their letter to him which had demanded that he make a public apology or, failing which, he should resign as Prime Minister, Dr Mahathir said it smacked of arrogance.

"They claim to be the champions of democracy but what they are doing is far from democratic.

"The efforts to topple a leader chosen by the people and by a majority of a country is pure hypocrisy."

Asked about the G-15 Finance Ministers meeting, the Prime Minister said whatever proposals Malaysia would make would be based on a need for proper currency market and transparency "as we know some of the speculators do not exactly have ringgit but they borrow to sell".

"So we want to know why they are doing this," he added.

The Prime Minister, who was accompanied by Perak Menteri Besar Tan Sri Ramli Ngah Talib, was welcomed by some 10,000 people, mostly villagers.

He later visited the various projects under construction at the Laketown and was briefed on the development by Emkay Group of Companies executive chairman Datuk Mustapha Kamal Abu Bakar.

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