

15 DEC 1997

Summit-Opening

SECOND ASEAN INFORMAL SUMMIT OPENS IN KL

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 15 (Bernama) -- The Second Asean Informal Summit opened here today amid efforts to get a grip on financial and economic problems currently affecting the region.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is presiding over the summit which is being held at the Palace of the Golden Horses hotel here.

The leaders are expected to issue a special statement on the financial crisis and the Asean Vision 2020 document which provides a roadmap for the grouping in the coming century.

Apart from Indonesia's President Suharto who has been advised to get a complete medical rest, other Asean nations are represented at the summit by their heads of state or government.

Those here are Sultan Hassanah Bolkuh of Brunei, Philippine President Fidel Ramos, Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong of Singapore, Thailand's Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai, Vietnamese Prime Minister Phan Van Khai, Laotian Prime Minister Khamtay Siphandone, Chairman of Myanmar's State Peace and Development Council Than Shwe and Indonesian foreign minister Ali Alatas who is representing Suharto.

The summit will be followed by the signing of two documents -- the Memorandum of Understanding to establish the Asean Foundation by Asean foreign ministers and the Protocol to Implement the Initial Package of Commitments Under Asean Framework Agreement on Services by economic ministers.

Dr Mahathir will also launch the Asean commemorative pictorial book entitled "Asean: One Region One Vision" produced by Bernama and the Asean Masterworks Exhibition.

Later in the afternoon, Asean will also have its inaugural summit with China, Japan and South Korea which are represented by President Jiang Zemin, Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto and Prime Minister Koh Kun respectively.

Dr Mahathir is scheduled to give a media conference after each meeting.

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