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APEC-NEWS-CYBERJAYA

APEC LEADERS ARRIVE FOR RETREAT AT CYBERVIEW LODGE

By: E. Sivabalan

CYBERJAYA, Nov 18 (Bernama) -- Apec leaders this morning adjourned to Cyberjaya, Malaysia's first intelligent and arguably its most sophisticated city some 40km south of Kuala Lumpur, for their customary retreat.

After a hectic day of bilateral meetings and a briefing from the Apec Business Advisory Council (ABAC) in Kuala Lumpur yesterday, the leaders showed up at the retreat in colourful "batik" attire under clear skies.

The male leaders donned "batik" shirts which were reportedly priced at RM600 each while the only woman leader, New Zealand prime minister Jenny Shipley, was clad in a lavender-coloured floral "baju kebaya" with a blue sash or "selendang".

They gathered at the plantation-like environment of Cyberview Lodge here, which is located next to the hub of the development of multimedia products and services in the country.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had said that Cyberjaya was chosen as the venue for the retreat to provide the leaders with an atmosphere of lush greenery and a scenic landscape apart from showcasing the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC).

The leaders from the 21 Pacific Rim economies are on their second and final day of the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (Apec) Forum summit. They arrived from 8 a.m.

Besides Dr Mahathir and Shipley, the other leaders at the retreat were Australian Prime Minister John Howard, Brunei's Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah, Canada Prime Minister Jean Chretien, Chile President Eduardo Frei, Chinese President Jiang Zemin, Hong Kong, China Chief Executive Tung Chee Hwa, Indonesia's President B.J.Habibie;

Japan Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi; South Korean President Kim Dae-Jung; Mexico President Ernesto Zedillo; Papua New Guinea Prime Minister Bill Skate; Philippine President Joseph Estrada; Singapore Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong; Chinese Taipei's representative Dr Chiang Pin-kung; Thai Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai; U.S. vice-president Al Gore; Peru President Alberto Fujimori; Russian Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov; and Vietnam Prime Minister Phan Van Khai.

Amid tight security, the leaders started off the day by taking a group photograph at the lodge's poolside.

After the photo session, the leaders proceeded to the mini conference hall for their "retreat meeting".

They will break for lunch where they will be served with local dishes such as "Kajang satay" (a barbecued meat dish) and "soto ayam" (a spicy chicken soup).

The meeting, which is expected to last about six hours, will be followed by the reading of the Apec Declaration in the evening by Dr Mahathir, who also is Apec chairman.

The leaders will then bid farewell to each other. They will also be presented with Barbie dolls donning traditional Malay attire.

Dr Mahathir will then leave for a news conference in the evening at the Palace of Golden Horses Hotel in Kuala Lumpur

Cyberjaya, a core component of the MSC, is located on a 2,800-ha site. It is a 750-sq km zone designated as a hub for the development of multimedia products and services.

This new city, which is being developed using the environment-friendly concept, is situated five kilometres north of Dengkil at the road leading

towards Puchong.

Next to it is Putrajaya, the federal government's new administrative centre on a 7,000-ha site.

--BERNAMA

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