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Bridging info gap with students' help

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KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - In a bid to bridge the information gap and provide an accurate assessment of Malaysia and other Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation countries, Apec leaders and captains of industry attending the grouping's business summit next month would be interviewed by Malaysian and American students and the interviews beamed to member economies.

The interviews are also being conducted with the aim of combining local technological capability with human resource development, especially that of the younger generation.

The exercise, involving 16 to 18-year-old students, will be organised by the Apec Business Summit Organising Committee together with the Multimedia Development Corporation (MDC) and an American educational programme called Virtual Trade Mission (VTM).

The event will be called the Apec MSC-VTM Global Interview and ntv7 will be the official anchor channel for the interviews.

The interviews will be conducted in the vicinity of the business summit to be held at the Putra World Trade Centre from Nov 14 to 16.

At a Press briefing today, co-chair of the organising committee Dr Shafiq Sit Abdullah said the event would showcase the importance of economic and technical co-operation which would foster a greater understanding of the sensitivities and priorities among Apec countries.

The programme is expected to generate strong interest among the 1,500 high-level delegates expected and wide recognition for Malaysia's efforts during its year as chair and host for Apec.

Some of the dignitaries whom the organisers will be inviting to be interviewed include Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, US President Bill Clinton, US Commerce Secretary William Daley, President Eduardo Frei of Chile, New Zealand Prime Minister Jenny Shipley, International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz, chairman and president of Bank of China Wang Xuebing, US securities firm Morgan Stanley chairman John S. Wadworth, United Parcel Service chairman and chief executive officer James P. Kelly and Avon International chairman Andrea Jung.

Ministry of Energy, Telecommunications and Posts secretary-general Datuk Nuraizah Abdul Hamid, who was also present, said a multi-pronged technology-based approach which included broadcasting media and the Internet would be used for the event.

"The Global Interview will clearly demonstrate that Malaysia, as chair of Apec 1998, is committed to the development of global community projects such as this. It is an enduring platform upon which future Apec summits will be able to look back on the KL Summit as one which inaugurated a genuine effort to build a community founded upon shared values across the Pacific.

"This new Pacific generation will be one of enlightened individuals, sensitive to the different values, the rule of law, and traditional considerations of societies in the new global village."

The interviews would be conducted in relay from 9am to 3pm on each day of the business summit.

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