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DATES CLASH, MAHATHIR DECLINES INVITATION TO JAKARTA FORUM

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 13 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had to decline an invitation to address a forum in Indonesia on Nov 19 as the date is not suitable, the Prime Minister's Office said today.

This was because the date for the Indonesia Forum clashed with Malaysia's hosting of the leaders' summit of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum from Nov 17 to 18, it said in a statement.

Moreover the Nov 19 date for the Indonesia Forum also clashed with that of the scheduled visit by one of the heads of government attending the Apec summit.

The statement acknowledged that the prime minister did receive an invitation from the organiser of the two-day Indonesia Forum.

"The Prime Minister had never decided to attend the Indonesia Forum in view of the above reasons and as such the question of Dr Mahathir cancelling his visit to Indonesia to address the Forum does not arise," the statement said.

An official reply that Dr Mahathir regretfully could not attend the forum had been sent to the organiser, said the statement clarifying a foreign newswire report on the matter.

A Reuters report from Jakarta yesterday quoted a statement by the forum organiser that Dr Mahathir's decision not to attend had resolved a "potentially sensitive issue".

The report said the Indonesia Forum is a major corporate and investment event which assembles top-level executives of major international organisations.

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