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APEC-NEWS-TALKS

MALAYSIA DENIES REQUESTING BILATERAL TALKS WITH CANADA

By: Ahmad Fuad Yahya

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 11 (Bernama) -- The Malaysian Foreign Ministry has denied making a request for formal bilateral meeting between Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his Canadian counterpart Jean Chretien during the APEC Economic Leaders' Summit here next week.

The ministry said in a statement today that the Malaysian government did not make any request for such a meeting between the two premiers during the summit on Tuesday and Wednesday.

The ministry was clarifying a report in "The Star" on Sunday that Canada had turned down a request by Malaysia for a formal meeting between Dr Mahathir and Chretien on the edges of the summit.

The statement said the Nov 17 meeting between the two leaders was arranged in accordance with the Apec practice which provides for such a meeting between the chairman of this year's and last year's summits.

"The purpose of such meetings is to discuss follow-up of APEC issues agreed upon in the preceding year.

"This practice is intended to provide continuity in the APEC process," it said.

In this view, the question of Canada turning down Malaysia's request for a formal bilateral meeting between Dr Mahathir and Chretien did not arise, it added.

-- BERNAMA

AFY TS