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APEC-NEWS-OBUCHI

OBUCHI TO MEET 5 APEC LEADERS DURING APEC SUMMIT

TOKYO, Nov 10 (Oana-Kyodo) - Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi will hold separate talks with five APEC leaders during his Nov. 16-18 visit to Malaysia for an annual summit of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum, government officials said Monday.

Obuchi will meet with Australian Prime Minister John Howard, Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien, Indonesian President B.J. Habibie, Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad and Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori, all on Nov. 17, on the fringes of the two-day APEC summit, the officials said.

They said the meetings are expected to focus on APEC issues, Japan's economic aid, and efforts to beef up bilateral ties.

Meanwhile, Foreign Minister Masahiko Komura and International Trade and Industry Minister Kaoru Yosano will also hold a series of bilateral talks with their counterparts during their Nov. 12-15 visit to Kuala Lumpur to attend an APEC ministerial session, which opens Nov. 14, the officials said.

Komura will meet his counterparts from Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand as well as U.S. Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky and Malaysian International Trade and Industry Minister Rafidah Aziz on Nov. 13, the officials said.

He will also attend a Nov. 13 dinner hosted by Australian Foreign Minister John Downer that will gather several ministers to discuss the ongoing Asian economic crisis, the officials said.

On Nov. 15, Komura will meet with U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright to pave the way for U.S. President Bill Clinton's Nov. 19-20 visit to Japan and to exchange views on recent security and political issues concerning North Korea, Russia, the Middle East and Iraq, the officials said.

They said specific economic and trade issues are expected to come up during Komura's talks with Barshefsky.

Komura may also hold separate talks with his Chinese and Russian counterparts, but arrangements have not yet been made, the officials said.

APEC comprises Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand and the U.S. --
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