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APEC-NEWS-PWTC

PWTC SPRUCED UP FOR APEC BUSINESS SUMMIT

By: Ahmad Fuad Yahya

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 13 (Bernama) -- Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC), the country's premier convention centre, is all geared up to the meticulous details to play host for the two-and-a-half-day APEC Business Summit which kicks off tomorrow.

At the same time, it has prepared itself for the biggest challenge to turn in six hours the Merdeka Hall - the summit's main venue - from a convention centre to a banquet hall for the Gala Dinner, where US President Bill Clinton is scheduled to give his keynote address on Monday.

PWTC is the host venue for the Business Summit to be attended by 1,200 captains of industries from 21 Apec-member economies, including Russia, Peru and Vietnam to be inducted into the grouping in this summit.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will open the summit on Sunday. Five Apec leaders have so far confirmed participation in the "special sessions with APEC leaders" on Monday afternoon.

They are Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien, Korean President Kim Dae-Jung, Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori, Mexican President Ernesto Zedillo and Chilean President Eduardo Frei.

PWTC had also been placed under tight security with scanners installed at all entrances and exits to the summit venue.

The centre had been given the Malaysian touch with floral decorations of 3,000 potted and 5,000 stalks of the Malaysian orchids of various varieties while for the Gala Dinner, some 3,000 stalks of roses will "grace" the banquet hall.

PWTC's Senior Manager of Public Relations and Communications Sopiah Suid said the orchid varieties include "Bom", "Golden Showers", "Iskandar", "Chark Kwan", "Dendrobium" and "Kooi Choo".

Orchids and roses were chosen as some of the participants and guest speakers were allergic to flowers with pollens, she said.

An international press centre which provide 200 desktop computers, 50 telephone and 15 fax lines have been installed to facilitate some 700 local and foreign journalists covering the event.

Sopiah said Special Functions Minister Tun Daim Zainuddin and New Zealand Prime Minister Jenny Shipley will be speaking during the luncheons on Sunday and Monday, respectively, while Entrepreneur Development and Second Finance Minister Datuk Mustapa Mohamed will be among the speakers at one of the sessions.

PWTC had also take great care in preparing the menu for the meals, taking into consideration the dietary requirements of the VIPs including Daim, who do not want any chicken or bird in his food, while Shipley doesn't take any nuts.

She said participants will be in a "pasar malam" (night market) atmosphere during the cocktail reception tomorrow evening where they will be entertained to hawker-style food.

Among the local delicacies on the menu are roasted chicken and duck rice, char kway teow, popiah, otak-otak, chicken and beef satay, roti jala, tosai, putu piring and kopi and teh tarik.

The Gala Dinner will serve western food injected with local flavour which include the "roti rempah" where local spices were put in the bread, mango and wild soursoup (durian belanda) parfait with Malaysian fruits and Ipoh coffee or Cameron Highlands tea for drinks.

Sopiah said apart from emphasising cleanliness to meet the required

hygienic standards in the kitchen, PWTC has also tested its backup emergency electricity for alternative power source in 40 seconds and water tanks which could supply water for a few days in case of any disruptions.

-- BERNAMA

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