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Apec-News-Hishammuddin

RELUCTANCE TO MEET DR MAHATHIR SHOWS ARROGANCE OF LEADERS

SERDANG, Nov 10 (Bernama) -- Acting Umno Youth chief Datuk Hishammuddin Hussein today described as arrogant the decision by some heads of government not to hold bilateral talks with Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) summit here.

"They are coming as guests of our country but are not showing respect to the post held by our Prime Minister, to our government and to the people of Malaysia," he told reporters after opening a forestry workshop at Universiti Putra Malaysia here.

This was an insult not just to the Prime Minister but also to Malaysia, reflecting the arrogance of developed countries, he said.

"But we, (consistent) with our values will receive them and treat them well. They do not know how to be guests, that is up to them, but we as the host should display the good manners of our culture and customs," he said.

Foreign news agencies reported that Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien had cancelled a planned meeting with Dr Mahathir although the former had the time to spare, and US President Bill Clinton too would not have bilateral talks with Dr Mahathir.

However, 12 heads of government were reported to have asked for bilateral meetings with Dr Mahathir.

Hishammuddin, who is Deputy Primary Industries Minister, said there was a lot of things that Malaysia could teach the West about manners.

Asked on the possibility of supporters of former deputy prime minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim holding demonstrations during the Apec meeting, Hishammuddin said they would be embarrassing not only the government but also themselves if they resorted to such actions.

The Apec meeting will be held from Nov 12-18.

-- BERNAMA

RV YBY