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APEC-MAHATHIR

CAMDESSUS UNABLE TO MEET DR MAHATHIR DUE TO TIGHT SCHEDULE

By: Jamaluddin Mohamed

LANGKAWI, May 14 (Bernama) -- International Monetary Fund (IMF) Managing Director Michel Camdessus is unable to meet Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad due to tight schedules.

Second Finance Minister Datuk Mustapa Mohamed said Camdessus has shown interest to meet Dr Mahathir and the latter has given a time but the IMF chief could not agree to the time proposed by the Prime Minister's Office.

"As you know PM is still in Sabah and his schedule is very busy while Camdessus will be presenting a paper in Langkawi tomorrow morning," he told a press conference on the eve of the sixth Apec Financial Ministers' Meeting here.

Camdessus is scheduled to arrive here tomorrow to attend the Langkawi meeting.

Answering other question on whether Dr Mahathir had refused to meet Camdessus, Mustapa said the meeting could not take place due to the tight schedule.

Commenting on a meeting between World Bank President James D. Wolfensohn and Keadilan President Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport yesterday, Mustapa said "any Malaysian could meet anybody."

"We don't have any restrictions on Malaysians wanting to meet anyone either another Malaysian or foreigner. We believe Malaysians are rational and can think for themselves on what is good or bad for the country," he said.

However, he said generally Malaysia, like other countries, did not like foreigners to interfere in its internal affairs.

Wolfensohn is also in Malaysia to attend the same meeting.

On the preparation for tomorrow's meeting, Mustapa said 500 people are expected to participate and the meeting would focus on reforms to the international financial system although there were signs of stability in the world economy at present. -- BERNAMA

JM SHY