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Journalists to answer questions for a change

TABLES will be turned on journalists covering the 4th Langkawi International Dialogue '99 as for the first time, they will have to answer questions from world leaders who will include Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Heads of State and Government at LID '99 will pose thought-provoking questions at journalists at a specific dialogue. The topics may include the role of the media in accelerating and sustaining Asia's economic recovery.

The BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) will recording the dialogue.

Co-organiser Malaysian Industry-Group for High Technology chairman Tan Sri Dr Omar Abdul Rahman said both parties would discuss various matters on the theme "Managing the Economic Recovery".

Dr Omar, who is also Science Adviser to the Prime Minister, said this was a new feature of the LID '99, to be held at the resort island of Langkawi from July 25 to 28.

"We have sent invitations to senior media officials to be on the panels of the dialogue with heads of State and government," Omar said at a Press briefing on the latest development of LID '99 in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

"Probably, the Prime Minister might ask newsmen their views on smart partnership and how useful the idea is as well as their role in promoting it.

"Of course, they will also pose questions at the heads of State and government."

He said the dialogue would be held in two sessions. Both sessions will be facilitated by Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Abdul Halim Ali.

Giving the latest information on participants at the LID '99, Dr Omar said eight heads of State and government including a king had confirmed their attendance, bringing a total of more than 350 delegates, including some 250 corporate participants.

President Cassam Uteem of Mauritius is the latest head of government to confirm his attendance. The others are President Festus G. Mogae of Botswana, Prime Minister Dr Pakalitha Bethuel Mosisilli of Lesotho, Dr Sam Nujomo of Namibia, President Omar Hassan Ahmad Al-Bashir of Sudan, President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe and King Mswati III of Swaziland.

Ghana, Seychelles and South Africa will be represented by their vice-presidents while Deputy Prime Minister Dr Supachai Panitchpakdi will represent Thailand.

Taiwan and Jordan are represented by their finance ministers, Zambia by its finance and economic development minister, Malta by its economic affairs minister and Tanzania by its energy and minerals minister.

Malawi is to be represented by its director of economic council while Kyrgyzstan will be represented by its parliament speaker Usup Mukambayev.

Besides heads of State and government and representatives from 17 countries, there will also be participants from 21 other countries including Japan, Britain, Indonesia and the Philippines.

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