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APEC-RETREAT

APEC: APEC LEADERS' RETREAT BEGINS

By: Ahmad Fuad Yahya

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, Nov 16 (Bernama) -- APEC leaders, looking smart dressed in blue silk long sleeve shirts, today began their retreat at the Jerudong Park Polo Club near here to dialogue informally ways to enhance economic cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region.

Besides the golden songket stripe on the right side, the APEC 2000 logo with 21 white stars beneath it decorate the other side of the shirt.

Before the meeting, the leaders signed the APEC Scroll, at the club's Royal Pavilion and thereafter posed for a group photograph at the Banquet Hall, the venue for the meeting.

The leaders are scheduled for a walkabout at the club's driveway, at noon today.

At the conclusion of the retreat, the APEC 2000 Declaration will be issued before the leaders depart for home or other destinations.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is scheduled to have a bilateral meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin, immediately after the Reading of the Leaders Declaration, at the same club.

The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum comprises Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Peru, the Philippines, Russia, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, the United States and Vietnam.

Malaysia hosted the APEC meetings and summit in 1998. Last year Auckland played hosts and it would be Shanghai's turn next year -- BERNAMA
AFY MR