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Apec-Retreat

APEC LEADERS WEAR SILK SHIRTS FROM ROYAL WEAVING CENTRE

By: Ahmad Fuad Yahya

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, Nov 16 (Bernama) -- Apec leaders, on their retreat at the Jerudong Park Polo Club near here today, took a 300-metre walk through the driveway of the club when they break for lunch, opening photo opportunities for the Press.

The first to walk out of the club building was Brunei's Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah, who was flanked by Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on his right and Russian President Vladimir Putin on his left.

They were followed by the Chief Executive of Hong Kong Tung Chee Hwa, Singapore Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong, Canadian Foreign Minister John Manley, New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark, Chinese President Jiang Zemin and Indonesian President Abdurrahman Wahid.

President Joseph Estrada of the Philippines rode on a golf buggy up to the entrance road leading to the Royal Brunei Golf and Country Club, where they had lunch.

US President Bill Clinton and the rest of the leaders except Thai Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai and President of Peru Alberto Fujimori, were among the last to walk out of the club house.

According to Apec officials, Chuan and Fujimori had a bilateral meeting in the club house.

The leaders, who were smartly dressed in tailor-made long-sleeve silk shirts in royal blue with subtly contrasting insets and cuffs woven with golden thread, were all smiles when as they walked pass the lenses of the press photographers.

The shirts, made as special gifts from the Sultan and designed on instructions of His Majesty, came from the Royal Weaving Centre, close to the Jerudong Park.

The woven stripe, on the right front of the shirt, is in a slightly different hue for each leader. On the left front is an APEC 2000 logo woven in the logo colours highlighted in gold.

Helen Clark, the only woman among the leaders, wore a jacket of similar design.

According to Apec press, Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah, in introducing the topic at the beginning of the dialogue, expressed hope that Apec would try to ensure that everyone in the region stood to benefit from globalisation.

Apec recognises that people were the most valuable asset. Adequate investment in training and education would prepare them for change, helping them maximise their potential to take advantage of and benefit fully from globalisation, he said.

The meeting was held closed door under tight security.

The Sultan also stressed the need for Apec to explain to the people of the Asia-Pacific region all measures and implementation of Apec to prevent a negative perception of globalisation.

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