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Mahathir-Meetings

MAHATHIR HAS HECTIC UNCTAD SCHEDULE

By: Mikhail Raj Abdullah

BANGKOK, Feb 12 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who is here attending the 10th United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (Unctad X), has a hectic schedule with meetings lined up with regional leaders and top UN and Unctad officials.

Preceding the opening of Unctad X by Thai Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai later in the afternoon today, Asean leaders and UN officials would hold a roundtable discussion on political, security and development issues.

Dr Mahathir will be the lead speaker for development issues during the talks, in which Laos and Cambodia would provide additional remarks on the Mekong Basin and Human Resource Development.

Asean heads of government are also scheduled to meet Japanese Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi to discuss reform of the international financial architecture, globalisation and Asean-Japanese cooperation, among other issues.

Dr Mahathir will have discussions with UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan in the evening and receive Chuan after that.

Most significantly, his presence at Unctad X will be his presentation at the first plenary session scheduled to begin at 7.30 pm local time (8.30 pm Malaysian time).

Dr Mahathir, who is the first speaker, is expected to call on Unctad to play a more definitive role in ensuring that developing economies too gain from the much-touted globalisation and liberalisation initiatives.

Other speakers include Indonesian President Abdurrahman Wahid, Singapore Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong and Obuchi.

Other leaders are also expected to take the opportunity to hold bilateral talks with Dr Mahathir on the sidelines of Unctad X.

Established in 1964, Unctad is the principal organ of the UN General Assembly in the field of trade and development.

All Unctad X events are being held at the Queen Sirikit National Convention Centre here.

Dr Mahathir, who arrived here yesterday accompanied by wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, is scheduled to leave for home at 9.30 tonight.

-- BERNAMA

MR RYN