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APEC-PUTIN

MAHATHIR TO HOLD BILATERAL MEETING WITH PUTIN IN BRUNEI

By: Mohd Nasir Yusof

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, Nov 9 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is scheduled to hold bilateral talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin on the sidelines of the two-day Eighth Meeting of APEC Economic Leaders beginning here on Nov 15.

Their meeting, scheduled to take place on the evening of Nov 16, will be held at Darul Taqwa Guesthouse in Jerudong, where Dr Mahathir will reside during his stay here.

According to Malaysian officials, both leaders are expected to discuss matters of bilateral importance to Malaysia and Russia, including trade and global issues.

The prime minister is scheduled to arrive here on Nov 14 ahead of the leaders' summit to be chaired by Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah of Brunei Darussalam.

All leaders of the 21 Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) economies are scheduled to arrive here on Nov 14.

Besides the meeting with Putin, Dr Mahathir is also expected to hold several other bilateral meetings with leaders from other developing economies.

Meanwhile, International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz is scheduled to arrive here on Nov 12 to attend the 12th APEC Ministerial Meeting.

She is scheduled to hold two press conferences for the Malaysian media on Nov 12 and Nov 13 to highlight Malaysia's agenda for the meeting.

All the meetings will be held at the newly-renovated B\$90 million International Convention Centre (ICC).

The centre, sprawled over 40,000 sq metres, has a hall that can accommodate 5,000 people.

Preparations for the ministerial meeting will be finalised at an informal senior officials' meeting (SOM), which would deliberate for two-days beginning tomorrow. It would be the fourth and final SOM for APEC this year.

Malaysia's delegation to the APEC 2000 meet comprises 27 officials as well as another 27 print and electronic media journalists. -- BERNAMA

MNY/DVS SHY