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Syed Hamid-Unctad

MAHATHIR IS FIRST KEY SPEAKER TO ADDRESS 10TH UNCTAD MEET

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 10 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will be the first key speaker to address the 10th conference of Unctad, the United Nations agency for trade and development in Bangkok on Saturday.

Dr Mahathir's key-note address would touch on globalisation, the financial system, free trade and development as well as other issues which affect Malaysia, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said.

"In conjunction with Unctad X, the prime minister will attend the Asean-UN Summit between Asean heads of government and UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and heads on UN agencies," he said.

Syed Hamid told reporters this after presenting his ministry's excellent service awards here today.

Dr Mahathir leaves for Bangkok tomorrow for the two-day Unctad X meeting and while there he will also attend an Asean-Japan summit tomorrow.

Syed Hamid said Malaysia would raise issues of development, trade, the financial system and globalisation at Unctad X.

"It is the thrust of the PM's speech. What is the role of Asean and how we could play a greater role in order to influence the globalisation process which is unstoppable.

"How do we create the new financial economic regime which will take into account the economic interests of developing countries," he said.

Unctad X, he said, would provide member countries with fresh opportunity to discuss trade and development issues following the failed meeting of the World Trade Organisation in Seattle.

About 3,000 ministers, senior government officials, representatives of international agencies and non-governmental organisations will be attending Unctad X, according to an earlier Unctad statement.

Syed Hamid said Deputy International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Kerk Choo Ting will represent Malaysia at the meeting which would broadly discuss regional politics and security, development and Asean-UN relations.

To a question, Syed Hamid said that the East Timor issue could possibly be raised at Unctad X in the context of regional politics and security.

On the Asean-UN summit, Syed Hamid said the multilateral meeting would discuss the needs of the UN and Asean's role in the new millennium.

Syed Hamid could not confirm whether Dr Mahathir would also meet the heads of government from other countries and the prime minister would have a very tight schedule at Unctad X.

-- BERNAMA

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