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ASEAN-ARRIVAL

LEADERS ARRIVE FOR ASEAN SUMMIT

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BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, Nov 3 (Bernama) -- Leaders from Laos and Cambodia were the early birds for the Seventh Asean Summit, arriving here today, while most of the leaders including Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad are due to arrive tomorrow.

Dr Mahathir is expected to arrive here tomorrow evening and will be attending the working dinner for heads of state/government of Asean later in the day.

The Seventh Asean Summit will then convene from Nov 5 to Nov 6 where Leaders are expected, among others, to address immediate concerns to South-east Asia such as the twin challenges posed by the global economic downturn and the international fight against terrorism.

Asean groups Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapura, Thailand and Vietnam.

Earlier this morning, the Asean senior officials meeting (SOM) kicked-off with officials currently in deep discussion to finalise preparations for the summit.

Asean Leaders are expected to deliberate on a wide range of topics such as responding to longer term challenges, accelerating regional integration and bridging the development gap.

They are also scheduled to decide on new priorities for the Hanoi Plan of Action adopted in 1998 while there will also be a session on HIV/AIDS to consider an Asean Work Programme in this area.

The Asean Leaders are also expected to hold additional talks with the leaders of China, Japan and Korea on Monday, the fifth such gathering since the enlarged "Asean + 3" summits began in 1997

On Tuesday, Asean Leaders will together hold separate "Asean + 1" meetings with each of the three leaders.

Meanwhile, Dr Mahathir is expected to hold bilateral talks with the leaders of Cambodia and Korea during the summit. -- BERNAMA

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