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Abdullah-Arrival

ABDULLAH ARRIVES IN TOKYO FOR ASEAN-JAPAN COMMEMORATIVE SUMMIT

By: Mohd Fisol Jaafar

TOKYO, Dec 10 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi arrived here tonight to join nine Asean heads of state and government for the two-day Asean-Japan Commemorative Summit, beginning tomorrow.

The summit, initiated by Japan and the first with a dialogue partner to be held outside the Southeast Asian region, marks the 30th anniversary of Asean-Japan relations. The other two Asean dialogue partners are China and South Korea.

Accompanied by Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar and International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz, Abdullah and the other leaders would take stock of 30 years of that relationship as well as exchange views on strengthening and deepening these relations.

Co-chaired by Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and Indonesia President Megawati Sukarnoputri, the summit would be held at the Geihinkan State Guest House in the heart of sprawling Tokyo, now in early winter.

Taking advantage of his first official appearance abroad since taking over as Prime Minister from Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad on Oct 31, Abdullah will hold bilateral talks with Koizumi at Sori Kantei, the Japanese Prime Minister's Office tomorrow morning.

He will then call on Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah of Brunei at the Imperial Hotel where most of the Asean leaders, including Abdullah, are staying during their stay here.

Abdullah will also hold talks with Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, Singapore Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong and Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra before attending the opening of the summit tomorrow afternoon.

The prime minister would have an audience with Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko at the Imperial Palace tomorrow afternoon before attending a dinner hosted by Koizumi.

The second day of the summit on Friday will see the leaders discussing various issues ranging from trade, finance to political and security relations.

They are also expected to adopt the Tokyo Declaration and Joint Plan of Action containing bold steps to enhance the Asean-Japan relations in the 21st century.

It is understood that the Tokyo Declaration would focus on the idea of an East Asian Community and an East Asia Free Trade Area.

Abdullah returns to Kuala Lumpur on Friday afternoon.

-- BERNAMA

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