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Abdullah-Summit

ABDULLAH TO ATTEND ASEAN-JAPAN COMMEMORATIVE SUMMIT IN TOKYO

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 8 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi will lead the Malaysian delegation to the two-day Asean-Japan Commemorative Summit which begins in Tokyo on Thursday, according to Wisma Putra.

It said in a statement issued today that Abdullah will be accompanied by Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar, International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz and senior government officials.

This will be Abdullah's first official appearance abroad as Prime Minister since taking over from Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad on Oct 31.

The Asean-Japan Commemorative Summit, which will be held at the Geihinkan State Guest House, marks the 30th anniversary of Asean-Japan relations and is the first summit with a dialogue partner held outside the Asean region.

At the summit, to be co-chaired by Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and Indonesian President Megawati Sukarnoputri, the leaders would take stock of 30 years of Asean-Japan relations as well as exchange views on strengthening and deepening their relations.

According to Asean sources, the Tokyo summit is expected to provide further impetus to the rapidly accelerating drive towards an Asian bond market.

The leaders are expected to discuss proposals that could bring about changes to the economic and financial landscape of East Asia in the coming decades.

Specific policies for the formation of regional ties for the 21st century would be discussed, sources said, adding that they would gather to build a community that acts together and advances together.

Speaking in Kuala Lumpur last month, Japanese Foreign Ministry spokesman Hatsuhsa Takashima said that his country aims to start trade talks with Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand at the Tokyo summit.

He said that talks on economic partnership agreements would follow, going beyond free trade pacts to include investment and other items, to add to Tokyo's existing one with Singapore.

Wisma Putra said in the statement that the summit would also provide the opportunity for Abdullah to meet his Asean colleagues and the Japanese Prime Minister.

Abdullah is expected to hold talks with Koizumi, Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, Singapore Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong and Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra.

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