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Malaysia to host Asia forum on leadership

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - A two-day forum bringing together 100 outstanding Southeast Asians who will play key leadership roles in business and government in the first decade of this century will be held here from June 9.

Serving as a platform for thought provoking and innovative dialogues, the inaugural `Asia Inc Forum on Leadership for Southeast Asia' will address the future and what it means for leadership while offering an insight into how the region is changing.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will address the forum on the first day while Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi will be attending a dialogue the next day.

Defence Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak and The Australian newspaper foreign editor Greg Sheridan will take part in a talk on "Southeast Asia in 2003: How we see the world and how the world sees us".

The forum will also address whether China's economic resurgence will affect economies and businesses in Southeast Asia, strategies laid for economies and business as well as the implications of the Asean-China Free Trade Area.

The dialogue, to be held for over an hour, is expected to be led by, among others, China's Ministry of Commerce chief trade negotiator and vice-minister Long Yongtu and Indonesian Minister of Trade and Industry Rini Soewandi.

The session will be moderated by Institute of Strategic and International Studies chairman Tan Sri Mohamed Nordin Soviee.

Other topics of discussion include "Proposition: Asean has lost its way and is no longer relevant to Southeast Asia".

Partai Indonesia Baru presidential candidate Dr Syahrir and Indonesia Bank Restructuring Agency chairman Syafruddin Temenggung, will lead discussions on what lies ahead for Indonesia in the run-up to the presidential elections of 2004.

There will be a dialogue session on foreign direct investment as well as a special luncheon address by Hong Kong Airport Authority chairman Dr Victor Fung. He will touch on the threats of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, its economic consequences and lessons learned.

The forum, to be held at Mandarin Oriental, will also examine "The Watch List", which includes the things to watch out for, the opportunities, the time frames and what is likely to happen.

The session will address what participants are watching out for, in the region and the "triggers" that will determine personal opinions on the future of Southeast Asia.