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Najib in flurry of high-level meetings

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BILATERAL TALKS:
Tight security cordon as Obama and heads of state arrive for Asean Summit dialogue

KUALA LUMPUR

MALAYSIA will roll out the red carpet for 18 world leaders attending the 27th Asean Summit and Related Summits today, the final summit the country will host as its chairmanship of Asean wraps up at the end of the year.

The summits today and tomorrow will be a showcase of Malaysia's organisational skills, and were preceded by three days of high-level meetings. Yesterday, officials, business leaders and foreign and economic ministers met at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre (KLCC) and other venues here to finalise the agenda and fine-tune logistics.

Security was tight at the venues, with delegates and media personnel being scanned before being allowed in. Heavily armed soldiers and policemen patrolled the streets surrounding the venues, and certain areas of the KLCC park were off limits to pedestrians.

Bernama, quoting federal police Internal Security and Public Order director Datuk Muhammad Fuad



Abu Zarim, reported the number of security personnel had been increased from 4,000 to 7,000.

In KLCC, Foreign Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Anifah Aman chaired two meetings with his Asean counterparts — the 13th Asean Political-Security Community Council Meeting (APSC) and the 17th Asean Coordinating Council Meeting (ACC).

At the end of the day's proceedings, Anifah briefed reporters on what had transpired during the closed-door meetings.

He said the APSC meeting discussed the progress made by the various bodies in Asean charged with deliberating matters related to security, defence and crime.

The ministers also raised the issue of the South China Sea, Anifah said. He said the ministers noted with concern developments in the waters and reiterated the need to maintain peace in the area.

The ACC meeting was more of a "housekeeping" affair, where the foreign ministers discussed the new

organisational structure of the Asean secretariat and approved the regional body's budget for next year.

Timor Leste's application to be the 11th member of Asean was also discussed, with talks on that to continue into next year.

The ministers also adopted several documents related to the day-to-day administration of the Asean secretariat.

While the meetings went on, the Royal Malaysian Air Force base in Subang was a hive of activity as the leaders began arriving.

But media attention was fixed on United States President Barack Obama, who arrived at 3.20pm. Obama was immediately whisked away to a town-hall session with 500 young Asean leaders at Taylor's University Lakeside campus.

Unfortunately, the numerous motorcades and tight security caused massive traffic jams in the Klang Valley, with motorists venting their frustrations on Twitter.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak had a tight schedule yesterday. In the morning, Najib attended the Asean Business and Investment Summit, where he also handed out awards to several businesses in the region. Five of the recipients were Malaysian companies — DRB-Hicom Bhd, AirAsia Bhd, QL Resources Bhd, Kossan Rubber Industries Bhd and Pointray Sdn Bhd.

Najib then attended the Asean Leaders' Global Investors' Dialogue.

Later, he had bilateral meetings with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Obama, and received



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak greets his Japanese counterpart Shinzo Abe during a bilateral meeting on the sidelines of the 27th Asean Summit and Related Summits, 2015 in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. Bernama pic

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang for a courtesy call. It will be a pivotal summit for Asean, as officials race against the clock to complete the plans to establish the Asean Community. The 10 Asean leaders will be joined by their counterparts from eight dialogue nations — Australia, New Zealand, India, China, South Korea, Japan, Russia and the US.

This global engagement underscores the importance world leaders

place on Asean, which straddles vital trade routes and is seen as a fast growing economic region.

Much interest will be on how the three big powers — Russia, China and the US — engage with Asean leaders against a backdrop of geopolitical challenges in other parts of the world. A new multipolar world order is emerging, and Asean will likely figure prominently in the power plays that will ensue.