

Dr M revisits Apec launch site

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Prime Minister returns to officiate Leader's Meeting after 21 years

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CYBERJAYA: In a walk down memory lane, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad has returned to the same location to launch the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) meeting for the second time in two decades.

In 1998, Malaysia hosted the Apec leaders' meeting during Dr Mahathir's first tenure as prime minister.

Fast forward 21 years later, Dr Mahathir is once again the prime minister and back at Cyberview Resort and Spa to launch Apec 2020, which Malaysia is hosting next year.

Before the launch, Dr Mahathir recreated the group photo taken in 1998 by standing at the exact spot he had stood in before.

In his speech, the 94-year-old premier expressed his pride in having Malaysia host the Apec summit again.

"In 1998, when Malaysia first hosted Apec and I was the fourth prime minister then, we chose Cyberjaya for the Leaders' Meeting as we had wanted to showcase Malaysia's Multimedia Super Corridor, our very own hub for the future development of the ICT, multimedia products and services.

"Cyberjaya of today has lived up to its name and is a prime location for technology-related companies



Light touch: Dr Mahathir launching the Apec 2020 in Cyberjaya. Joining him are International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Darell Leiking (left) and his deputy Ong Kian Ming.

as well as government agencies.

"We believe it is quite fitting for Malaysia to kick-start our second opportunity to host Apec at the same place as we did just over two decades ago," he said.

Dr Mahathir later said being part of Apec had taught Malaysia and other member countries a lot about free trade.

He pointed out that smaller economies cannot earn much from free

trade because they have little to trade or export, and therefore should be given some sort of protection.

"Some members of this free trade are very advanced in manufacturing and they produce a whole lot of things they can export that are actually desired by the other members.

"On the other hand, the smaller countries are just beginning to industrialise and find they cannot

compete with the old industrialised countries, so there must be some protection (for them)," he said.

Dr Mahathir also spoke about "bigger" countries whose people have begun veering towards right wing politics and subscribing to nationalistic sentiments.

"There is one big country that discarded free trade and has now decided that its own country is important while working with others is not.

"This new kind of thinking is affecting the whole world, where there is a flow to the right and that many are thinking about nationalism rather than multilateralism. So we need to discuss this thing (at this meeting)," he said.

On another matter, Dr Mahathir said Apec member countries decided that it was not necessary to have its annual meeting in the United States in January after host Chile pulled out of hosting the summit on Nov 16 to 17 following street protests in the country.

"An invitation (from the US) was extended to Apec countries.

"But almost everyone decided the meeting was not necessary, so we will not go," he added.

Watch the video
thestartv.com

