

## **Dr Mahathir to lead Malaysian delegation to APEC Summit**

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**From Mohd Iswandi Kasan Anuar**

PORT MORESBY (Papua New Guinea), Nov 16 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad will lead the Malaysian delegation to the 26th APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting (AELM) here from Nov 17-18.

The prime minister's attendance will provide the opportunity to showcase the New Malaysia as a mature democracy that upholds the primacy of the rule of law.

It will also outline Malaysia's commitments and position in working with other economies in the Asia-Pacific region towards achieving the objectives of the 2020 Bogor Goals and beyond.

Dr Mahathir's presence at the meeting underscores Malaysia's expectations of the APEC in building an Asia-Pacific community towards achieving economic growth and equitable development through trade and economic cooperation.

He will be accompanied by his spouse, Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali; Minister of Foreign Affairs, Datuk Saifuddin Abdullah; Minister of International Trade and Industry, Datuk Darell Leiking; as well as senior officials from the Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of International Trade and Industry.

Speaking to the Malaysian media here Friday, Saifuddin pointed out that this will be Dr Mahathir's first appearance at APEC as the 7th Prime Minister, representing a new government with fresh mandates and aspirations.

The last AELM that Dr Mahathir attended was in 2003 in Bangkok, Thailand, when he was the 4th Prime Minister.

During the just-ended ASEAN Summit in Singapore, Saifuddin stressed that Dr Mahathir was the only leader who openly brought up the issue of "fair trade" especially for developing countries instead of "free trade".

"He will continue talking about the importance of free and fair trade, and the other issues that you may expect from Tun could be something that very much align to the theme of the APEC meeting - digital future. Tun will be touching on, among others, the Fourth Industrial Revolution," he said.

APEC 2018, with the theme "Harnessing Inclusive Opportunities, Embracing the Digital Future", will be focusing on improving connectivity to deepen economic integration, as well as promoting sustainable and inclusive trade growth in the APEC region.

Meanwhile, Saifuddin said the highlight of the annual summit would be the Leaders' Retreat, during which Dr Mahathir will be sharing Malaysia's ideas and insights, as well as policy recommendations on the future direction of the economic forum.

In addition to attending the meeting, the premier is also scheduled to deliver his remarks at the APEC CEO Summit entitled "The Future of Economic Growth".

Dr Mahathir, together with other APEC Leaders, will participate in the dialogues with the APEC Business Advisory Council or ABAC and APEC Leaders' Dialogue with Pacific Island Leaders.

He is also scheduled to have several bilateral meetings with the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea; Prime Minister of Canada; Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region; and members of the United States-Business Coalition.

They will discuss matters of mutual interest with the objective of enhancing bilateral collaboration on pertinent regional and global issues.

The prime minister will conclude his working visit by meeting with the Muslim community in Papua New Guinea at the Hohola Mosque in Port Moresby, to reflect Malaysia's priority in enhancing relations with the Muslim ummah.

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