

35th ASEAN Summit begins

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By Linda Khoo

BANGKOK, Nov 3 -- The 35th ASEAN Summit and Related Summits officially began this morning at the IMPACT Exhibition and Convention Centre here.

The biannual gathering of leaders from all 10 of the grouping's member states was declared opened by Thailand's Prime Minister General Prayuth Chan o-cha.

Leading the Malaysian delegation to the summit is Prime Minister, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Right after the opening ceremony, Dr Mahathir is scheduled to head to a series of meetings with his ASEAN counterparts and the grouping's non-member states -- China, India, United States (US), and Japan.

Among the meetings that will take place here are the 22nd ASEAN-China Summit, 16th ASEAN-India Summit, 14th ASEAN-East Asia Summit (EAS), 10th ASEAN-United Nation (UN) Summit, 22nd ASEAN Plus Three Summit, and the 3rd Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) meeting.

This year's Summit with the theme "Advancing Partnership for Sustainability" is important because it gives ASEAN leaders an opportunity to review and study current issues and the ASEAN Community Agenda following the establishment of the ASEAN Community and endorsement of ASEAN 2025: Forging Ahead Together (ASEAN Vision 2025) in 2019 as well as the success of ASEAN chairmanship by Thailand.

Meanwhile, Dr Mahathir is also scheduled to hold a bilateral meeting with New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern later today.

The leaders will then attend the Gala Dinner this evening.

This is the second and final summit hosted by Thailand as this year's ASEAN Chair.

ASEAN chairmanship was chosen via a unique rotation system where host country is selected based on the alphabetical order.

Next year's ASEAN Summits will be hosted by Vietnam.

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