

Climate key issue for Wen at Asean talks

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Premier [Wen Jiabao](#) arrived in Singapore yesterday for the Asean annual leaders' meeting and the East Asia Summit, with climate change, energy and the environment shaping up as key discussion points. During his visit, Mr Wen will deliver a speech on the environment and climate change, according to Assistant Foreign Minister He Yafei .

"Everyone is concerned about climate change. We believe Singapore has a lot to offer in terms of technology in this regard," Mr He told Bloomberg news agency.

Global warming has emerged as a major world challenge as the adverse impact of human activities on the Earth's climate has been highlighted by the latest report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. It says the consequences of global warming may be far-reaching and irreversible. It attributes global warming to human causes, not natural ones. The focus on the environment has coincided with the announcement by a senior official at China's top planning department that an annual prize will be awarded to encourage energy-saving initiatives from mainland enterprises. Xie Zhenhua , deputy director of the National Development and

Reform Commission, told an environmental forum in [Beijing](#) yesterday that the central government would set aside 8 billion yuan in incentives for companies to make their operations greener next year. "The size of the reward to individual enterprises will be determined by an energy-saving survey carried out after the initiative in question is put into practice," said Mr Xie, former chief of the State Environmental Protection Agency, the country's top environmental watchdog. "The more energy it saves, the larger the share of the pool the company can claim."

Mr Xie also revealed that the central government had already spent 2 billion yuan this year compensating businesses for financial losses resulting from emission reduction-related overhauls, refitting and, in some cases, closure.

While climate change will be one of the major issues at the Singapore meetings, analysts say the crisis in Myanmar will be another key challenge for Asean.

In a joint media briefing with Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, Mr Wen said China hoped a solution to problems in Myanmar would be found through mediation by the United Nations.

Leaders of the 10 Asean nations, including Myanmar, will sign a landmark charter tomorrow to enshrine a legal framework giving the body greater international standing to mark its 40th anniversary.

They will also endorse the Asean Economic Community Blueprint to forge an accelerated single market across the grouping's 560 million people by 2015.

Mr Wen is expected to deliver a speech on China's economic policies today, and will meet new Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda for the first time tomorrow.

He will also join Mr Fukuda and South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun in three-way talks expected to focus on efforts to disable North Korea's nuclear programme.

On Wednesday, leaders of the East Asia Summit will issue a Singapore Declaration on Climate Change, Energy and the Environment.

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