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Mahathir-Zimbabwe

PM LEAVES FOR VISIT TO ZIMBABWE, PORTUGAL AND US

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 13 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad left for the Zimbabwean capital of Harare today, the first stop of a 17-day trip which will also take him to Portugal and the United Nations (UN).

Dr Mahathir was seen off at the Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah Airport in Subang by Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and his wife Datin Seri Wan Azizah Ismail.

Present were several Cabinet ministers and deputy ministers.

Dr Mahathir, who will be in Zimbabwe until Sept 17 to attend the World Solar Summit which begins tomorrow, is expected to deliver a keynote address at the summit aimed at seeking ways to step up usage of renewable energy sources.

He is also scheduled to address the inaugural World Solar Commission meeting. Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe will open the two-day summit on Monday.

Although known as the World Solar Summit, the meeting is expected to deliberate on other renewable energy sources like wind power, thermal energy and hydro-electric power.

From Zimbabwe, Dr Mahathir will fly to Lisbon to begin a three-day visit to Portugal starting Sept 20.

The Prime Minister, who has a tight programme in Portugal, is expected to call on Portuguese President Mario Soares besides holding talks with his counterpart, Antonio Guterres.

With Malaysia aiming to be on the world Formula 1 (F1) map through the proposed establishment of its own F1 racing circuit in the new administrative capital of Putrajaya, Dr Mahathir is slated to visit Portugal's F1 race tracks in Estoril.

After visiting Portugal, Dr Mahathir will travel across the Atlantic for his next stop, the American city of Boston where he is expected to visit the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to have a closer look at research and development activities being carried out there.

He will then move on to New York where he is scheduled to address the new session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on Sept 27.

Dr Mahathir's address will mark an important achievement by Malaysia as he will do so as the country's Permanent Representative to the UN, Tan Sri Razali Ismail, assumes the presidency of the UNGA on Sept 17.

Dr Mahathir will also have a series of bilateral meetings with other heads of government present for the UNGA.

His other activities in New York include opening the Malaysia Cultural and Arts Exposition and addressing the Asia Society.

Dr Mahathir will leave for London on Sept 27 en route home. -- BERNAMA
MAM AFY JK