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Mahathir-Visit

PM ON WORKING VISIT TO JAPAN AND US

By: Tham Choy Lin

KUALA LUMPUR, May 11 (Bernama) -- After an eventful week of politics at home, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad departs tomorrow night for a working visit to Japan and the United States.

He will be in Tokyo from May 13 to 18 before proceeding to the US. He is scheduled to return on May 24, said an official of the Prime Minister's Department.

The Prime Minister is scheduled to arrive in the Japanese capital on Monday morning and deliver a commemorative address at the World Teleport Association assembly at the Tokyo International Exhibition Centre in the afternoon.

He will also visit the Tokyo Business Show '96 and the Tokyo Teleport Building after that.

On Wednesday, Dr Mahathir will make a keynote speech at a presentation of Malaysia's Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) project sponsored by Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Corporation.

The Prime Minister is a keen information technology advocate and the first head of government to go "live" on the Internet. He is chairman of the National Information Technology Council (NITC).

Malaysia is planning to set up its own MSC over a 600 sq km stretch linking the new Kuala Lumpur International Airport in Sepang, the future Federal Government administrative capital, Putrajaya, and Kuala Lumpur.

A teleport concept is being considered for Putrajaya designed as an ultra-modern city equipped with the latest information technology and infrastructure.

Teleport is a one-stop access facility that provides fast exchange of information through voice, data, video and audio transmission via advanced telecommunications.

On Friday, Dr Mahathir will make another keynote address at an international conference entitled "Future of Asia" organised by Nihon Keizai Shimbun Inc after lunch.

In the morning, he will receive Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Ltd President Nobuyuki Masuda. A meeting between the Malaysian leader and Filipino President Fidel Ramos has been tentatively arranged.

In the US, Dr Mahathir will make stopovers in San Francisco for the high-level San Francisco Dialogue and in Washington DC to attend the Pacific Basin Economic Council (PBEC) 29th International General Meeting.

On May 20, he will present the keynote address at the San Francisco Dialogue that will focus on Malaysia-US business and technology partnership. It is organised by the Asian Strategy and Leadership Institute (Asli) and the PBEC Malaysia Member Committee.

International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz will also make a special ministerial presentation at the dialogue which will showcase Malaysia to the US west coast business community and the high-technology sectors based in the Bay area.

Immediately after the dialogue, Dr Mahathir and Rafidah will travel to the American capital for the PBEC annual general meeting that is entitled "Beyond Rhetoric: Impelementing Free Trade and Investment in the Pacific Region".

The Prime Minister will speak on "The Asian Values Debate" in addressing the plenary session on May 21 while Rafidah will participate in the plenary session on "Japan in the 21st Century".

The PBEC was founded in 1967 as a forum for regional business leaders to promote trade and investments through open markets. Its multinational membership includes over 1,000 corporate members in 17 member committees and the chairman of the Malaysian Member Committee is United Plantations Berhad Chairman Tan Sri Basir Ismail. -- BERNAMA

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