

16 MAY 1996

Mahathir-Visit

PM VISITS STEEL AND ROBOTIC PLANTS

By: Tham Choy Lin

TOKYO, May 16 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who is on a working visit here, spent today touring a robotics automation plant and the Kawasaki Steel Corporation works in Chiba near here.

Dr Mahathir's visit to the Fanuc Ltd plant in Yamanashi and the Kawasaki Steel works lasted three hours each, said an official from the Prime Minister's Department.

At the Fanuc plant, about 45 minutes by helicopter from here, Dr Mahathir was received by its chairman and chief executive officer, Seiueemon Inaba.

The plant is known for using automation extensively to produce robots for industrial use.

Dr Mahathir, who was accompanied by science adviser in the PM's Department, Tan Sri Prof Omar Abdul Rahman, had lunch with Inaba before flying to Chiba.

At the sprawling Chiba plant, which is a leading producer of premium quality steel, he was welcomed by the Kawasaki president, Kanji Emoto.

Also present was Economic Planning Unit Director-General Tan Sri Ali Abul Hassan Sulaiman.

The Kawasaki plant in Chiba located at Tokyo Bay, about 43 km from here, is equipped with the most advanced facilities in the world. The plant which produces crude steel and has a production capacity of 8.5 million tonnes annually is spread over 870 hectares.

Dr Mahathir, who arrived on Monday, wraps up his visit tomorrow by presenting a paper entitled "Towards a Stable Asia" at an international conference on the future of Asia organised by Japan's leading business newspaper, Nihon Keizai Shimbun.

He is also scheduled to meet Philippine President Fidel Ramos and two Japanese corporate leaders earlier in the morning. Ramos is also attending the international conference.

The Prime Minister will fly to the United States on Saturday evening for a similar working trip. -- BERNAMA

TCL CTL