

07 OCT 1997

Adventurer

I CAME TO MALAYSIA BECAUSE OF DR MAHATHIR- JAPANESE ADVENTURER

KOTA BAHARU, Oct 7 (Bernama) -- "I came to Malaysia because of Dr Mahathir," a Japanese adventurer Kenichi Shibuta who arrived here on bicycle said.

He stopped over here as part of his cycling tour of the Asia-Pacific region on his mountain bike, which began on Feb 27. The first country he visited was New Zealand.

Shibuta, 30, said he had always heard about Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad as a world leader and statesman.

"Dr Mahathir has tirelessly spoken up for the truth and I am awed by him," he told reporters here before leaving for Bangkok.

Shibuta said he also stopped over in Malaysia to see for himself the lives of the various races in Malaysia and their strong bond of unity and also to witness Malaysia's rapid progress.

Apart from New Zealand and Malaysia, Shibuta had also stopped over in Fiji, Australia, Bali, Jakarta and Singapore where he celebrated his 30th birthday on Sept 26 and said he had a memorable stay in Singapore.

Shibuta is an Economics graduate from Meiji Gakuin University in Tokyo. He works as a sales representative for a company in Otemachi, Tokyo.

He spent about US\$80,000 on his cycling tour and was grateful to God that he did not experience any injury, sickness or theft in the course of his trip.

Shibuta hopes to document his travels on his return to Japan. --

BERNAMA

ZI RON AAM