

12 MAR 1997

Mahathir-Forum (With pix)

MAHATHIR TO DELIVER KEYNOTE ADDRESS AT FUKUOKA DIALOGUE

PETALING JAYA, March 12 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will deliver a keynote address entitled "The Digital Century: Opportunities for Mutual Collaboration between Japan and Malaysia" at the Fukuoka Dialogue to be held at the International Forum in Fukuoka, Kyushu, on March 28.

The forum is jointly organised by the Asian Strategy and Leadership Incorporated Sdn Bhd (Asli), the Asia Business Centre and the Nishinippon Newspaper Co Ltd, both of Fukuoka.

Asli president Mirzan Mahathir told a news conference here today that Dr Mahathir, who will be on a five-day official visit to Japan from March 25, had consented to address the forum to be opened by his Japanese counterpart, Ryutaro Hashimoto.

He said that the forum is expected to be attended by some 1,800 Japanese businessmen and entrepreneurs.

Mirzan said that other distinguished Malaysian speakers at the dialogue would be International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz, Health Minister Datuk Chua Jui Meng, Pulau Pinang Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon, Kedah Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Sanusi Junid and Multi-Media Development Corporation (MDC) executive chairman Tan Sri Dr Othman Yeop Abdullah.

He said that among other things, the dialogue is aimed at promoting closer economic and business relationship between Japan and Malaysia and encouraging Japanese small- and medium-sized industries to invest in Malaysia.

Besides promoting closer multilateral ties between other Asian countries and Japan, it would also enhance Japanese participation in Malaysia's Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) and facilitate strategic alliances and joint ventures between Japanese and Malaysian companies with special focus in areas related to the Information Technology, he added.

Mirzan said focussing on the challenge for Asia in the digital century, discussions would be centred on emerging corporate realities and how strategic alliances and closer ties between Asia and Japan would meet the challenges in the information era, in particular between Malaysia and Kyushu.

"Opportunities for Kyushu and Malaysia from the MSC would also be explored as the Japanese business community in Kyushu had been very openly supportive of Dr Mahathir's East Asia Economic Caucus concept," he said.

Asia Business Centre president Kenji Takimoto said a special session would be held on the MSC the following day (March 29) with Dr Othman who at the dialogue would deliver a paper on "The Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) - A World Class Opportunity for Japanese Businessmen". -- BERNAMA

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