

13 JAN 1997
Mahathir-Arrival
PM ARRIVES FOR U.S. VISIT

LOS ANGELES, Jan 13 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad arrived here Sunday to begin a week-long working visit to Los Angeles and California's Silicon Valley.

Dr Mahathir's visit is jam-packed with meetings with captains of industries, including a one-on-one meeting with Microsoft founder and chief executive officer Bill Gates. The prime minister is also scheduled to tour movie studios and multimedia companies, witness the signing of at least eight memorandums of understanding (MOU's) between American and Malaysian multimedia companies, and join Malaysian students in two breaking-of-fast sessions.

Dr Mahathir, who is leading a 150-member delegation of Malaysian companies and government corporations, will address the Hollywood entertainment industry at a luncheon in Beverly Hills Hotel, and speak to hundreds of potential MSC investors in two business forums at the University of California in Los Angeles (UCLA) and at Stanford University.

The inaugural meeting of the 29-member International Advisory Panel (IAP) of the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC), which the prime minister will chair at Stanford University in Palo Alto, is a significant part of his visit.

The panel, which will advise the government on the MSC's future, is made up of IT consultants such as Dr Keniche Ohmae of Japan who teaches at both UCLA and Stanford University. Also on the panel are giant names in the multimedia business such as Gates, James Barksdale of Netscape, Louis Gerstner of IBM, Nobuyuki Idei of Sony and Gary Tooker of Motorola.

Dr Mahathir is also scheduled to launch the Electronic Government in Silicon Valley, which in the near future will link up to 100,000 government employees to a variety of multimedia applications, allowing government departments to share databases and communicate with each other via electronic mail or e-mail.

The system will also allow the public, businesses, policy makers and government employees to interact with each other electronically.

The PM and his entourage will proceed to Tokyo on Jan 18 for a four-day visit to promote the MSC to leading-edge technology companies in Japan.

The MSC project, which is expected to turn the country into a sophisticated IT centre in the region, will encompass Kuala Lumpur and the new federal administrative centre at Putra Jaya. -- BERNAMA

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