

19 MAY 1997
Mahathir-Arrival
PM ARRIVES IN LONDON

By: Wan A.Hulaimi

LONDON, May 19 (Bernama) -- Within just four hours of touchdown at Heathrow airport early today, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad was whisked to a helipad in the south of the city for the first tour of his working visit here to visit the GEC-Marconi plant in Caswell in Northamptonshire, about 112km west of here.

Dr Mahathir, here with an entourage of some 100 Malaysian entrepreneurs on a tour to promote the Malaysian Multimedia Supercorridor (MSC), had a grand view of the approaching metropolis from the cockpit of the Malaysian national carrier as it descended on Heathrow airport already bathed in soft spring sunlight at 6.30 in the morning.

At Caswell, on the first leg of his visit, Dr Mahathir will tour the Marconi material technology plant and hold discussions before returning to his hotel in central London in the afternoon.

The main thrust of this visit will be at Britain's premier science university, the Imperial College tomorrow where he will deliver the keynote address at the MSC investors' conference to explain Malaysia's MSC project and to invite British participation.

The precursor to this confence was held last March 28 when the British Foreign office hosted a one-day seminar in Duxford (near Cambridge) to inform British technological companies of the importance of information technology developments in Malaysia and Singapore.

After the conference and question and answer session at the Imperial College, Dr Mahathir will travel the short distance to the Science Museum in the college's vicinity to receive a fitting symbol of the information technology, the Babbage Computer, the eponymous machine of Charles Babbage, the father of modern computing who started, but never finished, constructing his mechanical computer from 1823.

Dr Mahathir will also be the first political leader from outside Western Europe to meet the new British Prime Minister Tony Blair when he pays a courtesy call at 10 Downing Street, the Prime Minister's residence, tomorrow afternoon.

Later, in his hotel, he will witness the signing of 12 memorandus of understanding (MOUs) between Malaysian and European companies for joint-venture developments in fields ranging from telemedicine to the development of the world's first "wallet-pc" (called the "e-pass"), to software development.

On Thursday, the tour will take him once again on a helicopter ride out of the capital, to Warwick, where he will be attending a briefing by Prof Bhattacharyya, on the much-acclaimed Warwick Manufacturing Group.

Dr Mahathir will also be briefed there by Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) vice chancellor Datuk Dr Ahmad Zaharuddin Idrus on the collaboration between UTM and Warwick University before holding a meeting with Malaysian students from the Warwick/Coventry campuses.

The visit will end on Friday with a visit to the Commonwealth Partnership Technical Management (CPTM) before Dr Mahathir departs London for a private visit to Europe. -- BERNAMA

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