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PM begins working visit to Hungary

Rashid Yusof in Budapest

PRIME MINISTER Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad begins a two-day working visit to Hungary today two months after his Hungarian counterpart, Gyule Horn visited Malaysia.

Horn had then extended an invitation to Dr Mahathir to visit Hungary. The Prime Minister, who made an official visit to Hungary in 1987, will be accompanied by his wife, Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, Cabinet Ministers, senior government officials and corporate leaders.

Among those in the delegation are Culture, Arts, and Tourism Minister Datuk Sabbaruddin Chik, Science, Technology and Environment Minister Datuk Law Hieng Ding, Deputy Foreign Minister Datuk Dr Leo Michael Toyad and Deputy International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Kerk Choo Ting.

Dr Mahathir is scheduled to meet Horn today, followed by a delegation meeting when the Hungarian side is expected to brief their guests on opportunities in tourism, privatisation and investment.

Tourism is big in Hungary. Some 4.3 million foreigners visited Hungary in January and February, which was the winter period, and spending US\$274 million (RM685 million), an increase of 35 per cent over the same period last year.

Hungary has also embarked on a privatisation policy while some US\$2 billion inward investment is expected annually over the next three years.

Tonight, Horn, who said that he was most fascinated by the ability of Malaysia to agree on major issues, will host a banquet for Dr Mahathir at the Parliament Building.

On Tuesday, Dr Mahathir is scheduled to speak to the Hungarian private sector on the Multimedia Super Corridor which he is promoting internationally.

He will also receive the Hungarian National Assembly speaker, Dr Zoltan Gal, who visited Malaysia in May last year.

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