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DR MAHATHIR SAYS VOLVO TO CONTINUE EXPANDING IN MALAYSIA

By: Wan A Hulaimi

LONDON, April 1 (Bernama) -- Volvo, one of the world's biggest automobile makers, has full confidence in the Malaysian economy and will continue with its expansion plans in the country, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today.

Speaking after a brief visit to Volvo in Sweden where he had witnessed new car making techniques, he added that Volvo company officials, who expressed great interest in Malaysia, also believed that the present economic difficulties affecting the country were only temporary.

Dr Mahathir, who is here to attend the Second Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM2) beginning tomorrow until Saturday, told Malaysian journalists after meeting leaders of Kelab UMNO United Kingdom for about an hour, that he hoped to explain the South East Asian economic situation to European countries.

Asian nations attending the ASEM2 meeting would issue a statement as well as a joint communique at the end of the meeting. Sources here said the communique is expected to touch on the South East Asian crisis.

While in London, Dr Mahathir will hold talks with Asian and European leaders including Indonesian vice president B.J.Habibie, Luxembourg prime minister Jean Claude Juncker and French president Jacques Chirac besides attending the ASEM2 Summit.

He is also scheduled to visit Leaffield, a company in Oxford later on Wednesday, hold a closed-door dialogue with members of the Commonwealth Partners for Technical Management (CPTM) on the Malaysian economy and witness an agreement signing ceremony to promote Malaysian products at the Harrods department store.

Before leaving for home on Saturday, he will visit the Frazer-Nash research consultancy outside London.

After the ASEM2 Summit, Dr Mahathir will deliver a keynote address at a special conference on "Building a New Asia Europe Partnership".

It will be attended by representatives from more than 20 countries in Asia and Europe. Twenty corporate captains from Malaysia will attend the three-day conference.

The conference will also study the achievements of ASEM2 besides discussing various trade issues concerning Asia-Europe and the world.

Other speakers at the conference include the British minister of state for foreign affairs, Derek Fatchett, Securities Commission chairman Datuk Dr Munir Majid and the Singapore-based Asia-Europe Foundation executive director, Prof Tommy Koh.

Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah, who is also here with Dr Mahathir, will open an art exhibition "Rupa Malaysia" in the Brunei Gallery at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) on Thursday. "Rupa Malaysia", which will display works from well-known Malaysian artistes, is jointly organised by National Art Gallery of Malaysia and the Asia-Europe Foundation. --

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