

16 OCT 1998

Mahathir-Arrive

MAHATHIR ARRIVES FOR JAPAN VISIT

By: Azman Ujang

TOKYO, Oct 16 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad arrived here today for a five-day working visit.

The prime minister, accompanied by his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, was met on arrival by the Malaysian ambassador here, Tan Sri Khatib Abdul Hamid.

A hectic schedule ranging from meetings with editors of the Japanese media to top businessmen, academia and government officials awaits Dr Mahathir.

He is expected to give Malaysia's side of the story on the introduction of currency and exchange controls to insulate the Malaysian economy from external uncertainties.

Dr Mahathir is also expected to talk about the political developments following the sacking of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim from his cabinet and concern in Japan over Kuala Lumpur's strained relations with Singapore.

Dr Mahathir will be holding a series of meetings with top Japanese businessmen over the next five days during which he is expected to allay their "perceptions of uncertainties" about their investments in Malaysia.

Today, Dr Mahathir will sit down with editors-in-chief of eight major Japanese newspapers, Kyodo news agency and NHK, the Japan Broadcasting Corporation. There will also be interviews with other media organisations during the visit.

He is also scheduled to meet with Keidanren, the top-notch Japanese chamber of commerce and Japanese prime minister Keizo Obuchi and have an audience with Emperor Akihito.

Dr Mahathir will attend the second Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD II) opening here on Monday, a follow-up to TICAD I held here in 1993 under a Japanese government initiative to push for development in still largely poor African countries.

Dr Mahathir, himself a strong advocate of African development through South-South cooperation, will address the conference to be attended by 10 African heads of government.

-- BERNAMA

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