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Dr M cancels trip to forum in Davos

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has cancelled his trip to Davos, Switzerland, where he was scheduled to attend the annual World Economic Forum from Jan 27 to Feb 1.

The Prime Minister was also to have delivered a keynote address besides holding informal meetings with leaders of the world economies during the forum.

A Prime Minister's Department official when contacted today said Dr Mahathir made the decision not to go to Davos while in Argentina on holiday a few days ago.

He could not say why the Prime Minister cancelled his trip.

The official said that despite the changes, the Prime Minister's visit to Paris on Jan 29 to meet French president Jacques Chirac was on as scheduled.

Dr Mahathir will also make a brief stopover in London.

"When the Prime Minister decided not to attend the CHOGM meeting in South Africa last November, it also surprised everyone.

"We see no reason for anyone to be surprised or to question that (that the PM is not attending the Davos meeting)," he said.

Dr Mahathir is currently on a two-week leave in the Carribeans until Wednesday (Jan 26).

The official said Dr Mahathir would not be represented at the forum.

He said the government officials who were supposed to accompany Dr Mahathir to Davos had been told of the change a few days ago.

He also denied media reports that Dr Mahathir had fallen off a horse in Argentina last week.

"There is absolutely no truth in the allegation.

"It was someone in the Prime Minister's group who fell off the horse but it was definitely not the Prime Minister," he said.

Other Islamic leaders participating in the Davos forum are the King of Jordan and the presidents of Egypt and Indonesia while the West will be represented by the Kings of Norway and Spain and the presidents of Austria, Czech Republic, Finland, Germany and Italy.

The dialogue is to identify similarities in Islamic and Western cultures.

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