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Mahathir-Visit

DR MAHATHIR LEAVES FOR WEEK-LONG WORKING VISIT TO JAPAN

SEPANG, June 7 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad left for Japan today for a week-long working visit during which he will attend a major economic conference and explore latest technologies to boost Malaysia's industrial development.

The Prime Minister departed from the KL International Airport here on an MAS flight at about 1.25am. He is scheduled to arrive in Nagoya at 9am local time today.

Accompanying him on the visit are his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali and officials of the Malaysian Industry-Government Group for High Technology (Might) and Wisma Putra.

His first stop will be Nagoya to see some of the most modern plants belonging to Japanese multinationals besides those in Tokyo.

A private sector delegation, which includes Tan Sri Ahmad Johan, president of AIROD -- Malaysia's key aerospace concern -- is also accompanying Dr Mahathir, fondly known as the CEO of Malaysia Inc.

AIROD subsidiary SME Aerospace is scheduled to ink agreements with a major Japanese corporation in Nagoya for acquiring the latest computerised high-tech equipment to make precision aircraft parts.

Dr Mahathir will join world leaders to attend the funeral of the late Japanese prime minister Keizo Obuchi at the Nippon Budokan in Tokyo on Thursday. Obuchi died on May 14, six weeks after suffering a stroke and falling into a coma.

The same day Dr Mahathir is scheduled to call on Yoshiro Mori who succeeded Obuchi as prime minister.

This is his first working visit to Japan after he led the Barisan Nasional coalition's return to power in last November's general election and after being returned unopposed as Umno president at the party's general assembly last month.

The high-powered conference he will attend in Tokyo -- Nikkei's 6th International Conference -- will map out strategies to accelerate East Asia's recovery from the devastating 1997 financial crisis.

Dr Mahathir will deliver a keynote address at the conference on the future of Asia organised by the media group Nihon Keizei Shimbun.

-- BERNAMA

RZS MNY YBY