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Mahathir-visit

DR MAHATHIR TO MAKE WEEK-LONG WORKING VISIT TO JAPAN

KUALA LUMPUR, June 4 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will leave for Japan on Tuesday for a working visit during which he will attend a major economic conference and explore latest technologies to boost Malaysia's industrial development.

A spokesman of the Prime Minister's Office said today his first stop will be Nagoya to see some the most modern plants belonging to Japanese multinationals besides those in Tokyo.

For the week-long visit, the prime minister will be accompanied by wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali as well as officials of the Malaysian Industry-Government Group for High Technology (Might) and Wisma Putra.

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

AIROD's 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.

During the visit, 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 leading the Barisan Nasional ruling 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 would attend in Tokyo -- Nikkei's 6th International Conference -- would map out strategies to accelerate east Asia's recovery from the devastating 1997 financial crisis.

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

Also attending the conference are Indonesian President Abdurrahman Wahid and Singapore's elder statesman and Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew.

-- BERNAMA

GM RYN