

12 JAN 2000

Mahathir-Vacation

MAHATHIR LEAVES FOR TWO-WEEK VACATION

SEPANG, Jan 12 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad left today for a two-week vacation in Argentina and the Caribbean, which will be followed by a week-long working trip to Davos, Switzerland.

Dr Mahathir, accompanied by his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, departed from the KL International Airport here at 1.05am.

On hand to bid him bon voyage was his deputy, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

In Davos, Dr Mahathir will attend the World Economic Forum from Jan 27 to Feb 1.

He will deliver a keynote address and participate in a cultural dialogue between leaders and heads of government of Islamic and western countries.

Other Islamic leaders expected to attend the dialogue 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 aimed at identifying the similarities in Islamic and western cultures to formulate strategies to resolve misunderstandings and differences.

It is also aimed at coming up with an early warning system on conflicts that arise from the misunderstandings and differences.

The prime minister is scheduled to have informal meetings with leaders of world economies during the forum.

Dr Mahathir will also make a brief visit to Paris on Jan 29 to meet French President Jacques Chirac to discuss bilateral and international issues.

He is scheduled to return home on Feb 3.

-- BERNAMA

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