

10 SEP 2001

Mahathir-Russia

DR MAHATHIR TO MAKE WEEK-LONG VISIT TO RUSSIA AND GERMANY

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 10 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will make a week-long trip to Russia and Germany beginning Wednesday.

His four-day trip to Moscow from Sept 12-15 is at the invitation of Russian President Vladimir Putin while his three-day visit to Germany from Sept 18-20 is at the invitation of German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, the Foreign Ministry said in a statement today.

It said Dr Mahathir will be accompanied by his wife, Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, and a 60-member delegation consisting of Cabinet Ministers, senior government officials and Malaysian businessmen.

On his visit to Russia, the ministry said Dr Mahathir visited the regions of Khabarovsk and Buryatia in August 1999.

The visit to the Russian Federation is to further enhance political, economic and trade cooperation, it said.

"The visit will also enable the Prime Minister to obtain first-hand impressions of the new dynamics that prevail in Russia in the post-Soviet era," the statement said.

The statement said Dr Mahathir will be meeting the Russian President to discuss bilateral, regional and international issues of mutual concern.

It said his programme includes visits to Russia's Bio-Tech Centre, Meteorological Centre and to witness the demonstration of SU30 jet fighters.

Dr Mahathir is also scheduled to address a Malaysia-Russia Business Forum jointly organised by the Asian Strategy and Leadership Institute (Asli), the Russian-Asean Cooperation Fund and Matrade.

During the visit, both governments are expected to sign the Memorandum of Understanding on Palm Oil Credit and Payment Arrangement while Bank Negara and Vnescomnbank of Russia will sign the Agreement on Palm Oil Payment Arrangement.

Bilateral trade between Malaysia and Russia for 2000 was valued at US\$265.6 million.

The value of Malaysia's exports was US\$74.5 million and imports from Russia totalled US\$191 million, the statement said.

It said total trade for the first quarter of 2001 stood at US\$65.4 million with Malaysia's exports amounting to US\$29.5 million and imports valued at US\$35.9 million.

On Dr Mahathir's trip to Germany, the statement said it is to provide the opportunity to showcase Malaysia's attraction for investors and tourists to come to Malaysia.

During his visit, the Prime Minister will also see first hand the latest technology used in the fields of biotechnology, information technology and transport industry, the statement said.

The visit will also provide the possibility of greater collaboration and cooperation in the field of education with Germany and will be utilised to further enhance political, economic and trade cooperation between Malaysia and Germany.

In Berlin, Dr Mahathir and Schroeder are expected to discuss bilateral, regional and international issues of mutual concern, the statement said.

It said Dr Mahathir would also receive a call by Joschka Fisher, German Vice Chancellor and Foreign Minister and is scheduled to meet Wolfgang Thierse, President of the Bundestag at the German Parliament building.

Dr Mahathir is also scheduled to open the Chancery building of the Malaysian embassy in Berlin.

In Munich, Dr Mahathir will address a business forum and scheduled to visit the Bio-Tech Centre, Siemens and to meet Malaysian students and community.

Malaysia's bilateral trade with Germany for the period between January and June 2001 stood at US\$2.45 billion. Germany is Malaysia's largest trading partner in Europe for the year 2000 and a major source of the Foreign Direct Investment to Malaysia, the statement added.

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