

21 JAN 2001

Mahathir-Departure

DR MAHATHIR LEAVES FOR HOME AFTER WORKING VISIT TO OSAKA

By: D. Arul Rajoo

OSAKA, Jan 21 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad left for home today after a four-day working visit here.

Dr Mahathir, accompanied by his wife, Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, left the Kansai International Airport near here on board a special Malaysian government jet.

The prime minister was sent off by Malaysian ambassador to Japan Datuk Marzuki Mohammad Noor and other embassy officials.

During his visit, Dr Mahathir delivered a keynote address at the Mainichi International Symposium, the first part of the "Wake Up Kansai" campaign aimed at reviving the sluggish economy in the Kansai region.

Speaking on the theme "Promoting Mutual Understanding Between Asia And Japan, Especially Kansai", the prime minister had urged Japan not to copy Western cultures 100 per cent but maintain its tested and successful traditional values.

He also attended a reception in commemoration of the publication of a book based on his articles in the Mainichi Daily News, the "Reflections of Asia".

During the visit, he also met Japan's Minister for Economic, Trade and Industry Takeo Hiranuma and Kansai Economic Federation chairman Yoshihisa Akiyama who is also the president of the Kansai Electric Power Co Inc.

One of the highlights of Dr Mahathir's visit was the tour to the Sharp Liquid Crystal Display (LCD) plant in Tenri City, Nara prefecture.

There, the premier, who witnessed the latest in the electronic world, called on the Japanese electronic giant to increase its investment in Malaysia, including locating its technologically-advanced LCD plant.

Besides that, he also explored multimedia learning at the well-known Osaka Electro-Communication University which specialises in information technology.

The prime minister then held a dialogue with Malaysian students studying in the Kansai region and participated in a Fuji Television Network recording of a forum entitled "Views And Ideas On The 21st Century-Future Of Asia And Japan's Choice".

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