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Mahathir-Visit

DR MAHATHIR HAS TIGHT SCHEDULE IN DUBAI

By: Harlina Samson

DUBAI, April 25 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will have a tight programme during his two-day working visit to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) beginning tomorrow.

Dr Mahathir, who is scheduled to arrive here at 11am, is scheduled to call on his counterpart Sheikh Maktoum Rashid Al-Maktoum, who is also UAE Vice- President and the Ruler of Dubai.

Malaysian Ambassador to the UAE Datuk Syed Hussein Alhabshee said Dr Mahathir would also deliver a keynote address to corporate and business leaders at a conference hosted by the Emirates International Forum themed "Meeting the Challenges of the 21st Century: The Role of Muslim Nations."

This is the second time Dr Mahathir has been invited to give a keynote address at the annual forum. The first was in 1998.

Emirates International Forum was set up in 1993 with the Crown Prince of Dubai and UAE Minister of Defence Sheikh Muhammad Rashid Al-Maktoum as its honorary chairman.

Dr Mahathir is also expected to have a question-and-answer session at the conference, he told Malaysian journalists covering the prime minister's visit.

In the evening, Dr Mahathir will visit the Dubai Internet City, Emirates Hills and Dubai Marina, he said.

He will also witness the signing of two Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) between the Multimedia Development Corporation and Dubai Internet City.

The other is between AirportXchange (Rpt AirportXchange), a Malaysian company which developed the airport management solution for KL International Airport, and Dubai International Airport and Dubai Internet City.

Dr Mahathir is also scheduled to have dinner with the Malaysian community hosted by the Malaysia Club UAE.

Syed Hussein said about 200 Malaysian professionals and businessmen are working in UAE, namely in Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Sharjah.

On the second day, Dr Mahathir is scheduled to perform Friday prayers at the Jumeirah Mosque and attend a luncheon hosted by Sheikh Mohammed.

In the evening, the prime minister will visit Burj Al-Arab, the world famous hotel in Dubai.

He is scheduled to leave for home at 11pm and arrive in Kuala Lumpur on Saturday morning.

The UAE is a federation comprising seven emirates -- Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm Al-Quwain, Ras Al-Khaimah and Fujairah.

The total area of these emirates is about 83,600 sq km with a population of about 2.94 million.

Abu Dhabi is the federal capital and Islam is the official religion.

Malaysia has its embassy in Abu Dhabi and consulate in Dubai.

The UAE is considered Malaysia's biggest trade partner in West Asia. Last year, the trade balance between the two countries reached RM3.8 billion in Malaysia's favour.

Dubai is the business and commercial centre of the emirate besides being the fastest growing tourist and business hub in the West Asia region.

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