

18 JAN 2001

Mahathir-Arrival

MAHATHIR ARRIVES IN OSAKA FOR WORKING VISIT

By: D. Arul Rajoo

OSAKA, JAPAN, Jan 18 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad arrived here today for a four-day working visit.

Dr Mahathir is accompanied by wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali.

The prime minister was met at the Kansai International Airport by Malaysia's ambassador to Japan Datuk Marzuki Mohammad Noor and other embassy officials.

Hours after arrival, 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," at the Osaka International Centre, Dr Mahathir later joined Thai Foreign Minister Surin Pitsuwan, South Korean Ambassador Choi Sang Yong, former Director General of the Economic Planning Agency Taichi Sakaiya and NTT West Japan President Kazuo Asada for a panel discussion.

Today, he is also expected to receive Chairman of Kansai Economic Federation (Kankeiren), Yoshihisa Akiyama who is also the President of the Kansai Electric Power Co. Inc.

Later in the evening, he will attend a reception in commemoration of the publication of a book based on his articles in the Mainichi Daily News.

Tomorrow, Dr Mahathir is scheduled to visit the Sharp Liquid Plant in Tenri City, Nara Prefecture and have a first hand look at Sharp's development of liquid crystal display (LCD) technology.

Following that he will travel to the Osaka Electro-Communication University which specialises in the Information Technology.

Dr Mahathir will then hold a dialogue with Malaysian students studying in the Kansai region.

On his third day here, Dr Mahathir will participate in a Fuji Television Network recording of a forum entitled "Views and ideas on the 21st Century-Future of Asia and Japan's Choice".

He is also scheduled to receive Japan's Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry Takeo Hiranuma.

Hiranuma is also chairman of the Japan-Malaysia Parliamentarian Friendship League and honorary chairman of the Malaysia Japan Association, a non governmental organisation comprising individuals and corporations.

Dr Mahathir leaves for home on Sunday.

-- BERNAMA

AR ES RYN