

17 JAN 2001

Mahathir-Japan

MAHATHIR LEAVES FOR JAPAN ON A FOUR-DAY WORKING VISIT

SEPANG, Jan 17 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad left for Japan tonight for a four-day working visit.

The prime minister will be in Osaka to deliver a keynote address at the symposium on "Promoting Mutual Understanding for Asian Countries, Japan especially Kansai" at the Osaka International Centre.

Dr Mahathir was accompanied by his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali.

On hand to bid him "Bon Voyage" at the KL International Airport here were Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, newly-appointed Women's Affairs Minister Datuk Shahrizat Abdul Jalil, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Brig Gen Datuk Abdul Hamid Zainal Abidin, and the Deputy Minister of Housing and Local Government Senator Datuk M Kayveas.

The symposium is being organised by Mainichi Shimbun to get views and ideas basically on Asia, and challenges and issues facing Asia especially in the new millennium.

The prime minister is also expected to receive the chairman of Kansai Economic Federation (Kankeiren), Yoshihisa Akiyama who is also Kansai Electric Power Co. Inc president. Kankeiren is a private non-profit organisation with approximately 860 major corporations and organisations as its members.

Dr Mahathir is scheduled to attend a reception to mark the publication of a book based on his articles in the Mainichi Shimbun Japanese newspaper.

The book is a compilation of a series of 17 monthly columns of commentary and opinion from February 1999 to June last year. The book was launched in Japan last month.

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

Dr Mahathir will also visit the Osaka Electro-Communication University, a 50-year-old institution which specialises in Information Technology, for a tour of its Department of Media-Information Culture established last year.

The prime minister will hold a dialogue with Malaysian students studying in the Kansai region at the Rihga Royal Hotel in Osaka where he would be staying during his visit.

On his third day in the city, which is bidding to host the 2008 Olympic Games, Dr Mahathir will participate in a Fuji Television Network recording of a forum on "views and ideas on the 21st Century-Future of Asia and Japan's Choice".

The prime minister is scheduled to return home on Sunday.

-- BERNAMA

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