

11 SEP 2001

Mahathir-Cancellation

MAHATHIR CANCELS TRIP TO BRITAIN

SEPANG, Sept 12 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has cancelled his visit to Britain and has not decided on his trip to Russia and Germany following attacks on New York and Washington Tuesday.

The Prime Minister made the last minute decision as he was about to depart for London from the Kuala Lumpur International Airport here last night upon being briefed by the Secretary-General of the Foreign Ministry Datuk Ahmad Fuzi Abdul Razak.

Speaking to reporters at KLIA's Bunga Raya complex, Dr Mahathir said if situation returns to normal today he would proceed with his trip to Russia later today itself.

Dr Mahathir said he decided to cancel his visit to Britain because of uncertainties following the attacks on New York and Washington and the closure of all airports in the US.

Moreover, he reckoned all European leaders would be preoccupied with tackling the problem.

Dr Mahathir was scheduled to leave for London at 11 last night for a stop-over in Britain before proceeding to Russia for a four-day visit beginning Wednesday followed by a three-day visit of Germany.

The prime minister arrived at KLIA's Bunga Raya complex at 10.45 last night and was immediately briefed by Ahmad Fuzi on the attacks on New York's World Trade Centre and the Pentagon in Washington.

Those present at the VVIP lounge to see the prime minister off then gave a round of applause upon hearing Dr Mahathir's decision to cancel his trip to London and defer his trip to Russia and Germany.

The Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and several members of the Cabinet were at the airport.

According to the original schedule Dr Mahathir is to meet meet Malaysian students at the Malaysian High Commissioner's residence before calling on the British Prime Minister Tony Blair during his stop-over in London.

His four-day visit 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 visit to the Russian Federation is to further enhance political, economic and trade cooperation where Dr Mahathir will be discussing bilateral, regional and international issues of mutual concern with Putin.

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 Memorandums of Understanding on Palm Oil Credit and Payment Arrangement while Bank Negara and Vnescomnobank of Russia will sign the Agreement of Palm Oil Payment Arrangement.

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

He will also see first hand the latest technology used in the fields of biotechnology, information technology and transport industry.

In Berlin, Dr Mahathir and Schroeder are expected to discuss bilateral,

regional and international issues of mutual concern.

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 is scheduled to visit the Bio-Tech Centre, Siemens and meet Malaysian students and community.

-- BERNAMA
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