

PM begins five-day working visit to Britain today

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in London**

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PRIME MINISTER Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad arrives today for a five-day working visit which includes a meeting with his British counterpart, Tony Blair.

The meeting, to be held on Monday afternoon at No 10, Downing Street, is expected to see discussions on bilateral relations although it is expected that the fight against terrorism will dominate.

Dr Mahathir was to have met Blair in September for a visit aimed at deepening investment, trade and education ties, but it was cancelled at the last minute after the terrorist attacks on the United States.

Dr Mahathir had instead written to Blair to express his views that there should be an international conference on terrorism towards

devising a long-term solution.

Subsequently, Blair telephoned Dr Mahathir in October to seek Malaysia's assistance in dealing with the conflicts in Afghanistan and the Palestine issue.

The two Prime Ministers held their first meeting as heads of Government in May, 1997, days after Blair took over as Prime Minister. They had met the year before when Blair was the Opposition Leader.

The meeting will also be attended by Malaysia's High Commissioner to Britain Datuk Salim Hashim.

After this meeting, Dr Mahathir is expected to hold an informal discussion with selected members of the House of Lords and House of Commons, organised by the Baroness Uddin of Bethnal Green.

Dr Mahathir's first function, after arriving from Argentina this morning, will be to celebrate Hari Raya Haji with about 1,000 Malaysians at Malaysia House, the official resi-

dence of the High Commissioner. He will be accompanied by his wife Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali.

The next day, he will meet Malaysian students from universities around London, and hold a dialogue with them at the Great Hall in the Imperial College.

On Tuesday, he will visit the Fraser and Nash Laboratories in Surrey. He will also attend a meeting of the Commonwealth Partnership for Technical Management on the same day. The CPTM was an idea first mooted at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Kuala Lumpur in 1989, and is aimed at boosting technical cooperation between the countries public and private sectors.

On Wednesday, he will be interviewed by the al-Jazeera television, the Arabic language global news channel, before departing for Kuala Lumpur.