

# Dr M: Germany has big role to play in world peace

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BERLIN: Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said that Germany, which "is profoundly committed" to a prosperous and peaceful world, has a major role to play in Europe and the world at large.

While the Berlin Wall might have been consigned to the pages of history, the Prime Minister said he was sure the German people would never forget what it symbolised and the lessons of history.

The wall stood as an "ominous reminder" to the people that Berlin and Germany were divided physically and ideologically, Dr Mahathir said when he declared open the new building of the Malaysian Embassy here on Tuesday.

He praised Germany for the successful transformation of Berlin as the capital of a free and reunited country, noting that the city "appears very comfortable" in its role as the capital two years after moving from Bonn.

"When I was last in Berlin in 1988, the wall had not yet been dismantled. Now, revisiting Berlin, it is such a pleasure for me to see a new, vibrant

Berlin, which has become the capital of a united Germany," he said.

Today, Dr Mahathir and Datuk Dr Siti Hasmah will be taken on a city tour, designed to give him an idea of the physical development of Berlin since the reunification, with visits to Potsdamer Platz, East Side Gallery and Checkpoint Charlie.

In the 1920s, Potsdamer Platz was Europe's busiest square, but was destroyed during the war and left idle until it was rebuilt in 1991 in the style of a typical European city.

East Side Gallery is a 1.3km-long stretch of the Berlin Wall, which has been preserved as a memorial.

In 1990, it became an open-air gallery with artwork from 118 artists from 21 countries.

Later, Dr Mahathir will meet German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer and then attend a luncheon hosted by Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder. He will also call on Bundestag president Wolfgang Thierse.

Tomorrow, the Prime Minister and his delegation will fly to Warsaw for the last leg of his three-nation tour of Russia, Germany and Poland.