

PM leaves for three-nation tour

SUN 16 APR 2002

SEPANG: Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad left yesterday for a week-long working visit to Morocco, Libya and Bahrain.

The prime minister, leading a 160-member delegation of cabinet ministers, government officials and 64 corporate leaders, will be in Morocco until Thursday, where he will proceed to Libya until Saturday.

Mahathir, who is accompanied by Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, will wind up the three-nation tour with a working visit to Bahrain on Saturday and Sunday.

Cabinet ministers in the entourage are Works Minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu, International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar, Entrepreneur Development Minister Datuk Nazri Abdul Aziz and Women and Family Development Minister Datuk Shahrizat Abdul Jalil.

The trip is an important one as it is expected to strengthen bilateral relations and economic cooperation between Malaysia and the three Islamic nations.

The thrust of the visit is to enhance trade and economic ties, which presently has much room for improvement.

Other important areas of discussions will include terrorism and the current Israel-Palestine conflict.

The highlight of his visit is expected to be a meeting on Thursday with Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi.

While in Morocco, Mahathir will call on King Mohammed VI. He will also meet his Moroccan counterpart, Abderrahmane Youssouffi, and then have an informal meeting with Malaysian students.