

# Dr Mahathir leaving for Japan and South Korea

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. — Globe-trotting Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad leaves for Japan and South Korea tomorrow on a trip that would have taken him almost a full circle around the world in just 10 days.

Barely three days after returning from a much-publicised visit to the United States, he will spend the next three days in Japan followed by another three in South Korea — tirelessly assuming multiple roles as chief spokesman for Malaysia's brand of Islamic leadership, chief salesman for Malaysian business and head of government.

Dr Mahathir's visit to the two countries has extra significance this time, coinciding with the 20th year of Malaysia's Look East policy.

The Prime Minister is due for talks with his Japanese counterpart Junichiro Koizumi in Tokyo on Tuesday before speaking at the Nikkei Conference, an event he has

not missed for the past six years.

The annual conference, organised by Nihon Keizai Shimbun Inc, gathers prominent figures across the region for a discourse on issues affecting Asia. This year's theme is the emergence of China.

Dr Mahathir has a more hectic schedule in South Korea as it is his first visit since 1990.

Apart from bilateral talks with President Kim Dae-jung, delegation meetings and a business luncheon, the Prime Minister is due to visit Hyundai Motor Company's Integrated Research and Development Headquarters on Thursday.

Among the places Dr Mahathir is visiting on Friday is the Satellite Technology Research Centre Initiative. The satellite firm is helping to build a Malaysian earth resources satellite.

Dr Mahathir is due to return to Kuala Lumpur after visiting the satellite facility.