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Congress-Mahathir

DR MAHATHIR TO SHARE VIEWPOINTS WITH US CONGRESSMEN

By: E. Sivabalan

WASHINGTON, May 11 (Bernama) -- Members of the United States Congress will get to share viewpoints with Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at the historic launch of the Malaysia Trade, Security and Economic Caucus, here, Tuesday.

The prime minister, who will be making a four-day official visit to the United States beginning Monday, is scheduled to host a luncheon for the Congressmen after the launch at the Speakers's Dining Room of the Capitol, the base of the American power elite.

The luncheon talk will be the inaugural event of the caucus, a newly formed Congressional member organisation aimed at promoting US-Malaysia ties.

Co-chairmen of the caucus, Congressmen Pete Sessions and Gregory W. Meeks, in a letter inviting members of the Congress to the caucus' launch, praised Dr Mahathir as "a man of unique vision and political experience".

Describing Malaysia as a moderate Muslim nation, they paid tribute to Dr Mahathir's leadership in forging a stable, multiracial, multi-ethnic and multireligious society.

Dr Mahathir, they said, had been the driving force behind Malaysia's "well-documented 30-year record of economic growth and development".

This success was due largely to the country's approach to economic development, they said.

In the letter, the congressmen said Malaysia's success in transforming its economy was best exemplified by its Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC), dubbed the Silicon Valley of East Asia.

"The MSC, home to many of the world's leading high-tech companies and other projects and initiatives, is the tangible result of Prime Minister Mahathir's concerted efforts to firmly establish Malaysia as a competitive force in the global economy," they said.

They said that today, Malaysia is the US' 18th largest export market in the world and a gateway for the American business community to compete in Asia.

The US exported nearly US\$11 billion in goods and services to Malaysia in 2001. Malaysia is also home to US\$6 billion in direct investment by US companies.

The congressmen said the visit marked Dr Mahathir's first visit to the Capitol in nearly a decade.

They said the prime minister was looking forward to discussing issues pertinent to Malaysia and the US, including security concerns, commercial relations and the strengthening of bilateral relations between the two countries.

They said US-Malaysia relations had achieved greater significance following the events of Sept 11.

"As you are aware, Malaysia has been a partner in the war on terrorism. Malaysian security forces have arrested 60 militants suspected of involvement in terrorist activities," the congressmen added.

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