

19 MAY 2002

Mahathir-Visit

DR MAHATHIR TO VISIT JAPAN AND SOUTH KOREA

KUALA LUMPUR, May 19 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will make a two-day working visit to Japan from tomorrow before proceeding to South Korea on Wednesday.

He will deliver a keynote address at the Eighth Nikkei International Conference on "China -- A Challenge or an Opportunity for Asean?" in Tokyo.

He is also scheduled to meet Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, Minister of Finance Masajuro Shiokawa and Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry Takeo Hiranuma.

Dr Mahathir will also be in Nagasaki for the Malaysia International Shipping Corporation Bhd's (MISC) ship naming ceremony.

The ship will be named Puteri Intan Satu. According to Wisma Putra officials, this is the first time that MISC, a subsidiary of the national Oil Corporation, Petronas, has bought a specially constructed ship for conveying liquefied natural gas (LNG).

A Wisma Putra statement says Dr Mahathir's two-day official visit to South Korea is at the invitation of President Kim Dae-Jung.

Apart from enhancing bilateral relations between the two countries, the visit is to build closer rapport and understanding between both leaders.

Dr Mahathir and Kim expected to hold a "restricted meeting", to discuss bilateral, regional and international issues of mutual interest, the statement adds.

This would be followed by a delegation meeting and a signing ceremony of five memorandums of understanding.

Dr Mahathir will also speak at a business luncheon organised by four major Korean business associations and make site visits to Hyundai Motor Research and Development, LG Chemical Investment and Satellite Technology Research Centre Initiative.

He will be accompanied by Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar, International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz and Energy, Communications and Multimedia Minister Datuk Amar Leo Moggie, Kedah Menteri Besar Syed Razak Syed Zain, senior government officials and media representatives.

This is the third visit by Dr Mahathir to South Korea, the last was in 1990.

Malaysia is the biggest investor in South Korea among the 10 Asean countries and its 11th largest trade partner.

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