

20 MAY 2002

Mahathir-Departure

DR MAHATHIR LEAVES FOR JAPAN AND SOUTH KOREA

KUALA LUMPUR, May 20 (Bernama) -- The Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad left here today for a two-day working visit to Japan before proceeding to South Korea on Wednesday.

He boarded a Tokyo-bound special aircraft at the Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) station in Subang near here at 9 am and was seen off by wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali and cabinet ministers.

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

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 christening of the Malaysia International Shipping Corporation Bhd's (MISC)-owned ship Puteri Intan Satu.

The prime minister will then make a two-day official visit to South Korea at the invitation of President Kim Dae-Jung aimed at enhancing Kuala Lumpur-Seoul bilateral relations and rapport between both leaders.

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

Dr Mahathir's delegation includes Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar, International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz, Energy, Communications and Multimedia Minister Datuk Amar Leo Moggie and Kedah Menteri Besar Syed Razak Syed Zain.

This is Dr Mahathir's third visit to South Korea. The last was in 1990.

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