

13 MAR 2002
Mahathir-Russia
TIGHT SCHEDULE FOR DR MAHATHIR IN RUSSIA

By: Ahmad Zukiman Zain

MOSCOW, March 13 (Bernama) - Talks with the Russian President and a landmark Russia-Malaysia business forum address will be among the schedule for Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad who arrives here tonight for an action-packed three-day official visit.

Moscow is the first stop on the Prime Minister's whirlwind visit to three countries that will also take him to Germany and Poland.

Dr Mahathir, accompanied by Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, is scheduled to arrive at 8.45pm tonight (1.45am Wednesday in Malaysia) from Kuala Lumpur.

An official welcoming ceremony will be held at the airport before the Prime Minister departs for the Radisson Slavjanskaya Hotel where the whole Malaysian delegation -- officials, businessmen and media representatives -- are staying.

His programme tomorrow will begin with a briefing at the Russian Federal Service for Hydrometeorology and Environmental Monitoring Service (Rosgidromet) followed with the laying of wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown.

Immediately after the ceremony, Dr Mahathir will head for the Grand Kremlin Palace for talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

It will be their third meeting after their fruitful discussions at the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) forum in Bandar Seri Bagawan two years ago and in Shanghai last year.

After their "one-on-one" discussion, Dr Mahathir and Putin will head their respective delegation for bilateral talks and witness the signing of agreements.

This will be followed by an official luncheon hosted Putin and his wife, Putina, in honour of Dr Mahathir and Dr Siti Hasmah.

The Prime Minister will then address the business forum to showcase Malaysia to Russian investors and businessmen and meet Malaysian students at a dinner at the hotel.

On Friday, Dr Mahathir will visit the Shemyakin-Ovchinnikov Institute of Bio-organic Chemistry Centre where he will witness the signing of the memorandum of understanding between the Malaysian and Russian Academy of Science.

He will later meet Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov before departing for Friday prayers at the Mira Mosque here.

After prayers, Dr Mahathir will attend a briefing and witness a flight demonstration of the Sukhoi SU 30 at the Zhukovsky Aviation Institute.

On Saturday, the Prime Minister will hold a news conference before leaving for Stuttgart, Germany.

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