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IMF-HUMOUR

KOHLER SHOWS HIS LIGHT SIDE AT LUNCHEON TALK

PUTRAJAYA, Sept 3 (Bernama) -- International Monetary Fund (IMF) managing director, Dr Horst Kohler, showed that he was not all about hard economic facts and cold figures as he displayed his lighter side at the end of his luncheon talk here today.

After he had received a memento from Encik Ahiruddin Atan, Editor of The Malay Mail, Kohler disclosed that his grown-up children had asked him why was he going to Malaysia since Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad was a staunch critic of some of the IMF's policies.

He told them that it was part of his job to visit IMF members and seek their views.

In this regard, Kohler said he wanted to find out from Dr Mahathir on what the prime minister thought on various economic and financial issues.

But Kohler, in tongue-in-cheek fashion, said, "I was also afraid whether I would get out of Malaysia (given the criticisms on the IMF). Now I even have gifts to take home!"

Kohler was not scheduled to stop over in Malaysia on his way to Phuket to attend the Apec Finance Ministers Meeting this weekend but was asked to come to Malaysia by Second Finance Minister Datuk Dr Jamaludin Jarjis on behalf of the government.

The IMF chief also said he would take up on Jamaludin's offer to play more golf in Malaysia on his next visit since one could play "nine holes under the sun, nine holes under the moon" as described by the Second Finance Minister in reference to the many night golfing facilities in Malaysia.

"I would also like to show that I am really human and a very bad golfer," he said.

The luncheon talk was co-organised by the NPC and the Malaysian Press Institute (MPI). Jamaludin later received a memento from MPI president Datuk Ahmad Talib. -- BERNAMA

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