

11/11/2003

Dr M to address forum

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TUN Dr Mahathir Mohamad arrived in this port city yesterday to deliver a keynote address at the Globalisation Forum 2003, his first foreign engagement since stepping down as Prime Minister on Oct 31.

He was accompanied by his wife Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali.

The executive jet carrying the former Prime Minister and his wife landed at the Naha International Airport about 11am.

He was received by Malaysian ambassador to Japan Datuk M.N. Marzuki, Institute for International Socio-Economic Studies (IISES) chairman Datuk Todahiro Sekimoto and Akiya Miyazato, president of Ryukyu Shimpo, a Japanese newspaper.

Dr Mahathir will be joined by other world luminaries such as former Soviet Union President Mikhail Gorbachev, former Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto, former Chinese Prime Minister Li Peng and former American Presidential Security Adviser Zbigniew Brezinsky.

About 1,000 participants are expected to attend the one-day forum, themed Democracy and Security in the Globalisation Era, at the Naha City Civil Hall.

The forum is organised by the IISES, the Gorbachev Foundation and Ryukyu Shimpo, a newspaper celebrating its 110th anniversary.

The topics include ways to unite the world against the threats of terrorism, the impact of the invasion of Iraq by the United States and Britain, new challenges to world security, rebuilding the world order and the opposition against globalisation.

Met at the airport, Dr Mahathir said he was looking forward to the forum.

"I believe it's going to be very interesting ...I am really looking forward to it," he said.

On his holiday in Spain, Dr Mahathir said he spent most of his time sightseeing.

"It was relaxing as there are no responsibilities now. I just have to work hard for my talks," he said.

Asked whether he was following developments back home, Dr Mahathir in jest said: "There has been no supply of news."

About his immediate plans when he returned home, Dr Mahathir said he had plenty of engagements.

"There are a lot of functions. I also need to go back to my constituency to meet the people," he said.

Dr Mahathir said he would also be giving talks in Italy, South Korea and Japan in the next two months.

The organisers said in the souvenir programme the forum was timely as the acceleration of globalisation had brought about changes in all aspects of international relations, including the economy, politics, diplomacy and security.

"Since the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the world order has dramatically lost its stability and has been characterised by different conflicts.

"At the same time, the world has been increasingly concerned over the emergence of unilateral diplomacy.

"At no other time has the aspiration for rebuilding the world order been more acutely expressed internationally."

This year's forum is the third in the series. In 2001, the Asian Peace and Security Forum was held in Tokyo followed by a similar one in Moscow

last year.