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PM's final IAP meeting?

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\* IT has been dubbed as Dr Mahathir's last IAP meeting.

The 7th International Advisory Panel meeting of the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC), kicks off on Thursday, with the usual high-level meeting by IAP members and representatives to discuss and provide strategic directions of the national tech project.

Among those who have confirmed their participation are seasoned IAP members such as Acer Group's chairman and chief executive officer (CEO) Datuk Dr Stan Shih, Cutler & Company Pte Ltd's managing director Terry Cutler, and Cyber Century Forum's chairman Ambassador Diana Lady Dougan.

Others who will be attending the meeting include Silicon Graphics Inc's chairman and CEO Bob Bishop, Professor William F. Miller of Stanford University, Sun Microsystems' chief researchers and director of science Dr John Gage, as well as NTT Communications Corp's president and CEO Masanobu Suzuki.

But the spotlight will surely be on the outgoing Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamed, who is the current IAP chairman.

He's considered the driving force behind the MSC and the growth of the local ICT industry.

It was during the launch of the Infotech Conference 1995 at the Putra World Trade Centre in Kuala Lumpur that Dr Mahathir announced the setting up of the MSC project as Malaysia's gift to the world.

In his speech, Dr Mahathir envisioned that the MSC will be the hub for many world-class ICT companies working in partnership with local outfits.

He also talked about attaining higher levels of efficiency and productivity through the use of information technology to transform the internal work operations and processes.

The MSC is now into its eighth year, and moving along as Dr Mahathir has envisioned, although it has also garnered its share of critics and sceptics. His departure will surely be felt by the MSC fraternity. Hence, it could well turn out to be not just a memorable but also an emotional IAP meeting this time around.