

PM to address Japan forum

Mahathir will speak about geopolitics at Nikkei Conference

TOKYO: The ever-changing dynamics of the international order and how new technologies shape the future outlook will be the gist of Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's keynote address at the opening of the 25th International Conference on The Future of Asia (Nikkei Conference) today.

The conference is anticipating some intense discussions as the world is beset by uncertainties, including the US-China trade war, the struggle for high-tech military supremacy and the rise of protectionism.

Dr Mahathir will be the first leader to deliver a keynote address at the conference, themed "Seeking a New Global Order - Overcoming the Chaos".

Other Asian leaders scheduled to deliver keynote speeches at the event are Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheik Hasina, Cambodia Prime Minister Hun Sen and Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte.

Hosted by Nikkei Inc annually since 1995, Nikkei Conference gathers government and business leaders to share their visions for the future of Asia and is considered one of the most important global conferences in Asia.

Malaysian Ambassador to Japan Datuk Kennedy Jawan said the event would be a platform for Dr Mahathir to put forth Malaysian policies and stand, as well as

attracting more trade and investment into the country.

Dr Mahathir, who is in Tokyo for a three-day working visit, is a regular attendee at the prestigious event, skipping it only four times.

This will be his fourth visit to Japan after his return to the helm of the country after the general election in May 2018.

During his last visit in November last year, Dr Mahathir was conferred the "Grand Cordon of the Order of the Paulownia Flowers" by the then Emperor Akihito of Japan.

Another highlight of the working visit is the bilateral meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe scheduled tomorrow.

"Both leaders will discuss matters of mutual concern and interest to strengthen bilateral ties and collaboration in many fields, encompassing trade, education, defence and others," Kennedy told a press conference here.

Meanwhile, Kyodo reported that Malaysia is in talks with Japan on sending blue-collar workers to the country under a new visa programme that was launched in April, quoting official sources.

According to the report, both countries are aiming to strike a deal as early as July and would discuss the details during Dr Mahathir's visit.

Also on Dr Mahathir's radar during this

visit is attracting more Japanese investment to Malaysia.

The Prime Minister will also attend the Malaysia-Japan Business Dialogue jointly organised by the Malaysian Investment Development Authority and Japan External Trade Organisation to meet more than 20 top Japanese companies, such as Mitsubishi Corporation, Sumitomo Corporation, Sankyu, Mitsui & Co, Kawasaki Heavy Industries and NEC.

Dr Mahathir will also deliver a keynote address on Malaysia-Japan future relations and policy direction to about 300 attendees at the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan.

His itinerary includes receiving courtesy calls from other leaders attending the conference as well as representatives from the Japan-Malaysia Parliamentarians Friendship Association and Toyo University.

A statement from the Foreign Ministry said this visit is expected to further enhance the existing multi-layered strong ties and bonds between Japan and Malaysia under the Look East Policy.

Dr Mahathir will be accompanied by his wife Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, Deputy Foreign Minister Datuk Marzuki Yahya, as well as officials from the Foreign Ministry and Prime Minister's Office. — Bernama