

DR M TO MEET PUTIN, MODI TODAY

Spare parts for jet fighters to feature in talks with Russian leader



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VLADIVOSTOK [Russia]

PRIME Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who arrived here yesterday to attend the 5th Eastern Economic Forum (EEF), is set to hold separate bilateral meetings with Russian President Vladimir Putin and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi today.

Dr Mahathir's meetings with Putin and Modi are his second after becoming prime minister for the second time, following Pakatan Harapan's victory in the 14th General Election last year.

Modi was among the first world leaders to hold a meeting with Dr Mahathir in Putrajaya to extend his congratulations over the historic victory.

Dr Mahathir last met Putin in Singapore last November. His meeting with Putin is expected to touch on a comprehensive cooperation framework on strength-



Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad arriving at the Vladivostok International Airport in Russia yesterday. BERNAMA PIC

ening bilateral ties between Malaysian and Russia, including in the defence industry.

Among the issues expected to be raised are spare parts for 30 MiG-29N and Sukhoi Su-30MKM fighter jets bought by Malaysia in 1995 and 2007.

It is unclear whether Dr Mahathir will touch on the European Union's move to boycott palm oil products from Asia, in-

cluding Malaysia.

On his meeting with Modi, Malaysian officials did not discount the possibility that the latter would bring up the issue of controversial India-born preacher Dr Zakir Naik, following Malaysia's reluctance to extradite him to face criminal charges in his home country.

Malaysian ambassador to Russia Datuk Mat Dris Yaacob said

Dr Mahathir's visit would boost not only diplomatic ties, but also spur bilateral trade with Russia.

Dr Mahathir is accompanied by Economic Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Azmin Ali, Foreign Minister Datuk Saifuddin Abdullah and International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Darell Leiking.

Dr Mahathir arrived here yes-

terday evening from Cambodia to attend EEF at the invitation of Putin. This marks Malaysia's first attendance at the forum, the brainchild of Putin to boost development in the Russian Far East.

Tomorrow, Dr Mahathir will speak at the forum's plenary session, which is EEF's main event, at the Far Eastern Federal University campus here.