

PM Mahathir in Japan for third working visit

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From Kamarul Ariffin Md Yassin

TOKYO, Nov 5 (Bernama) -- Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad arrived here Monday for a packed three-day working visit to Japan, his third trip to the country after taking office as Malaysia's seventh prime minister in May.

The highlight for his three-day visit is the ceremony of Imperial Conferment of Decoration Investiture "The Grand Cordon of the Order of the Paulownia Flowers" by the Emperor of Japan on Tuesday at Imperial Palace here.

The aircraft carrying the influential Malaysian leader touched down at Haneda International Airport at about 4 pm (3 pm Malaysian time).

Dr Mahathir is accompanied by his wife Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali.

On hand to welcome him and the delegation at the airport were Foreign Minister Datuk Saifuddin Abdullah, Japan's Foreign Affairs State Minister Toshiko Abe, Japanese ambassador to Malaysia Dr Makio Miyagawa as well as Malaysian ambassador to Japan Datuk Ahmad Izlan Idris.

The conferment of Japan's highest award by Emperor Akihito follows the huge contributions by the Prime Minister in strengthening bilateral ties.

Another highlight of Dr Mahathir's visit is his meeting with his Japanese counterpart Shinzo Abe at the Prime Minister's Office, which will be held after the conferment.

On the second day, Dr Mahathir is scheduled to attend the 36th Japan-Malaysia Economic Association (Jameca)-Malaysia-Japan Economic Association (Majeca) Joint Conference and

Malaysian Business Forum here.

He will deliver his keynote address on the current situation in Malaysia and the expected investment from Japan to about 600 corporate figures and captain of industries.

Before that, just a few hours after his arrival, the Prime Minister will be conferred an honorary doctorate by Tsukuba University at the university's Tokyo campus, which is the highest recognition by the university for his contributions to advance international exchange in the field of research and education.

On the third day, Dr Mahathir will deliver a keynote address at Toyo University here and interact with Japanese youths, especially students of the university.

Dr Mahathir will leave for home Wednesday afternoon.

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