

MAHATHIR

FROM NUSA SCULLY

83
DHAKA, APRIL 13 (BERNAMA) -- (DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD ARRIVED HERE TODAY ON THE FIRST LEG OF A NINE-DAY JOURNEY WHICH WILL ALSO TAKE HIM TO TWO OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE INDIAN OCEAN AREA - SRI LANKA AND THE MALDIVES.

THE PRIME MINISTER, WHO WILL BE HERE FOR THREE DAYS, WAS MET ON ARRIVAL DHAKA'S ZIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT BY BANGLADESH CHIEF MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATOR, LT-GEN. H.M. ERSHAD, FOREIGN MINISTER A.R. SHAMSUD DOHA, MINISTERS AND DIPLOMATIC CORPS MEMBERS.

DATIN SERI DR. SITI HASMAH WAS PRESENTED WITH TWO BOUQUETS BY A BOY AND GIRL DRESSED IN WHITE AND ORANGE TRADITIONAL DRESS.

ALSO PRESENT WERE MALAYSIAN HIGH COMMISSIONER MOHAMED HARON, STAFF OF THE HIGH COMMISSION AND A SMALL GROUP OF MALAYSIAN STUDENTS.

OVER A HUNDRED MALAYSIAN STUDENTS ARE STUDYING IN BANGLADESH, MAINLY MEDICINE AT DHAKA UNIVERSITY. -- MORE 1655/MB

MAHATHIR 2 DHAKA

LT-GEN. ERSHAD, WHO IS ALSO PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, THEN INVITED DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR, WHO WAS DRESSED IN A DARK SUIT, TO INSPECT A GUARD-OF-HONOUR MOUNTED BY THE ARMED FORCES.

A WARM BREEZE FLUTTERED THE FLAGS OF BOTH COUNTRIES AND THE WELCOME BANNERS IN BAHASA MALAYSIA AND BENGALI, AS THE PRIME MINISTER AND LT-GEN. ERSHAD MADE THEIR WAY TO THE ROW OF VIPs.

TEENAGE BOYS AND GIRLS IN TRADITIONAL GREEN, RED AND YELLOW DRESS WAVED PAPER FLOWERS AND RICE BASKETS - SOME HAVING THE WORD +SELAMAT DATANG+ - AND DANCED ON THE TARMAC IN THE MIDDAY SUN.

THE TWO LEADERS AND THEIR WIVES IN A MOTORCADE THEN MADE THEIR WAY TO THE OLD GANABHABAN GUEST HOUSE, PASSING FLAG-WAVING CHILDREN ALONG THE 15 KM JOURNEY AND THROUGH SEVERAL GREEN AND RED ARCHES WITH THE WORDS +SELAMAT DATANG+ WRITTEN ON THEM.

THE MALAYSIAN AND BANGLADESH'S GREEN AND RED NATIONAL FLAGS WERE FLOWN IN THE MAIN BUILDINGS AND STREETS OF THIS ANCIENT CAPITAL, FOUNDED IN 1608 AND NOW HAVING A POPULATION OF OVER 1.5 MILLION, PREDOMINANTLY MUSLIM BENGALIS.

-- MORE 1718/LK

MAHATHIR 3 DHAKA

BANGLADESH, IN CENTRAL SOUTH ASIA, HAS AN AREA OF 142,500 SQ. KM WITH LAND BOUNDARIES OF 2,535 KM WITH INDIA TO THE WEST, NORTH AND EAST, BURMA TO THE SOUTHEAST AND A COASTLINE OF 580 KM ALONG THE BAY OF BENGAL.

AFTER A PRIVATE LUNCH WITH MALAYSIAN FOREIGN MINISTER TAN SRI GHAZALI SHAFIE AND THE MALAYSIAN HIGH COMMISSIONER WHO MAKE UP THE 14 MEMBER OFFICIAL DELEGATION, THE PRIME MINISTER VISITED THE NATIONAL MARTYR'S MEMORIAL AT SAVAAR ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF DHAKA.

ON ARRIVAL BY HELICOPTER, HE WAS MET BY BANGLADESH MINISTER FOR WORKS, MAJ-GEN. ABDUL MANAN SIDDIQY, AND WAS SHOWN AROUND THE PRYAMID-DOMED STRUCTURE.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR LATER LAID A WREATH AT THE MONUMENT. LATER IN THE EVENING, THE PRIME MINISTER CALLED ON LT-GEN. ERSHAD.

-- MORE 1722/LK

MAHATHIR 4 DHAKA

A HIGHLIGHT OF THE VISIT WILL BE THE SIGNING OF A SHIPPING AND DOUBLE-TAX AVOIDANCE AGREEMENT BY THE FOREIGN MINISTERS OF THE TWO COUNTRIES.

THE PRIME MINISTER'S FORMAL TALKS WITH LT-GEN. ERSHAD WHICH BEGINS TOMORROW ARE EXPECTED TO CENTRE ON THE MALAYSIAN TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION PROGRAMME WHERE A RENEWED OFFER WILL BE MADE FOR INCREASED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.

THE CABINET RECENTLY GAVE PERMISSION FOR THE EXPORT OF 600,000 OIL PALM SEEDLINGS SPREAD OVER THREE YEARS AT 200,000 SEEDLINGS A YEAR.

THE TWO LEADERS WILL ALSO TOUCH ON THE KAMPUCHEAN ISSUE, ON WHICH BANGLADESH SUPPORTS ASEAN'S THE SOUTH ASIAN FORUM AND THE CONCEPT OF ZONE OF PEACE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN WHICH IS COMPLEMENTARY TO MALAYSIA'S EFFORTS TO CREATE A ZONE OF FREEDOM, PEACE AND NEUTRALITY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA.

TALKS TO IMPROVE THE TRADE BALANCE, NOW VERY MUCH IN MALAYSIA'S FAVOUR WILL ALSO BE HELD. INCLUDED IN THE MALAYSIAN DELEGATION ARE NINE MEMBERS OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR HEADED BY MALAYSIAN MALAY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY PRESIDENT AND BANK BUMIPUTRA EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN DR. NAWAWI MAT AWIN.

ALSO PRESENT ARE OFFICIALS OF THE MALAYSIAN OVERSEAS INVESTMENT CORPORATION.

TONIGHT, THE PRIME MINISTER WILL BE ENTERTAINED TO A BANQUET AT THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE - +BANGANHABAN+ - BY LT-GEN. ERSHAD.

A CULTURAL SHOW WILL BE PERFORMED.

-- BERNAMA 1750/LK