

Traditional welcome for PM and his wife

KOTA KINABALU, Sat. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his wife, Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali were accorded a red carpet and traditional welcome when they arrived for a two-day official visit today.

Chief Minister Tan Sri Sakaran Dandai and his wife, Puan Sri Siti Rukaiyah Datuk Panglima Abdullah were among the local dignitaries who were at the airport to welcome them.

Dr Mahathir and Dr Siti Hasmah were also greeted by *bunga manggar* bearers dressed in traditional costumes, a *kompang* troupe and also a *silat* demonstration.

Sakaran, who was sworn in as Chief Minister on March 17, later introduced Dr Mahathir to the State Ministers, Members of Parliament, State Assemblymen and community leaders.

It was the first visit by the Barisan Nasional chairman and Umno president to Sabah since the Barisan took control of the State Government.

Before getting into a limousine, Dr Mahathir and Dr

Siti Hasmah, also watched a Kadazan/Dusun traditional welcome which was accompanied with the beating of gongs to the tune of well-known local native dance called the *sumazau*.

It was performed by the Parti Bersatu Rakyat Sabah's (PBRS) traditional dance troupe headed by Ramdi Indang.

Among those present to welcome the visitors were Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Salleh Tun Said, State Umno liaison leaders, Sabah Progressive Party president and Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Yong Teck Lee, Liberal Democratic Party president Chong Kah Kiat and Angkatan Keadilan Rakyat president Datuk Mark Kodang.

Also present were the three presidents of newly formed political parties, Datuk Joseph Kurup of the PBRS, Datuk Bernard Dompok of Parti Demokratik Party and Datuk Dr Jeffrey Kitingan of Parti Demokratik Bersatu Sabah.

The others who there to greet Dr Mahathir and Dr Siti Hasmah were Information Minister Datuk Mohamed Rahmat, his deputy

Railey Jeffrey and Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Deputy Minister Datuk Abdul Kadir Sheikh Fadzir, who arrived here last night.

Soon after arrival, the Prime Minister held meetings with the State and Federal Government officers.

In the afternoon, he addressed a meet-the-people session at Wisma Muis before meeting leaders of the Barisan component parties and another meeting with the Sabah Umno liaison committee.

Tonight, the Barisan State Government hosted a State banquet at Istana Kota Kinabalu, the official residence of the Yang di-Pertua Negeri of Sabah.

Tomorrow morning, Dr Mahathir is scheduled to launch a RM1 billion international-class resort near Sepanggar Bay at Menggatal, about 30 minutes drive from here.

The Prime Minister and his wife will then tour a group of islands in the Tunku Abdul Rahman Park, off Kota Kinabalu, and have lunch at Pulau Manukan.

They leave for Kuala Lumpur in the evening.