

9 JAN 1996

Keating-Visit

KEATING TO MAKE TWO-DAY VISIT TO MALAYSIA TO BOLSTER TIES

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 9 (Bernama) -- Australian Prime Minister Paul Keating arrives here on Monday for a two-day visit, his first official trip to Malaysia, to strengthen bilateral relations.

He will be accompanied by his wife, Annita, senior government officials and a business group, Wisma Putra and the Australian High Commission said in separate statements today.

After the welcoming ceremony at Parliament Square, Keating will have an audience with the Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Ja'afar at Istana Negeri Sembilan.

Later in the evening, the Australian leader and his entourage will be hosted to a dinner by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at Seri Perdana.

On Tuesday, Keating will hold talks with Dr Mahathir at the Prime Minister's Department after which both leaders will witness the signing of agreements and Memoranda of Understanding between the private sector of the two countries.

He will then present a keynote address at the Malaysia-Australia Business Forum at Istana Hotel.

This will be followed by a courtesy call on him by Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and Economic Advisor to the Government Tun Daim Zainuddin.

A separate programme has been arranged for Annita which include meeting the surgical team and patients from the cochlear implant project at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.

The team made Malaysian medical history recently with the first implant of the Australian-designed "bionic ear" which helps deaf people regain their hearing.

Keating will leave for Singapore on Wednesday.

Keating, 51, was elected leader of the Australian Labour Party and Prime Minister by the Parliamentary Labour Party Caucus on Dec 19, 1991. He led the federal government to an historic fifth term victory in the March 1993 elections.

The last Australian leader to visit Malaysia was former Prime Minister Bob Hawke in February, 1984. -- BERNAMA