

25 AUG 1996  
Mahathir-Visit  
MAHATHIR TOURS SUMMER PALACE

By: Zainoor Sulaiman

BEIJING, Aug 25 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad who is on a four-day working visit to China today toured the ancient Yi He Yuan or Summer Palace in the northern suburb of this Chinese capital city of seven million people.

The Prime Minister, who was escorted by Vice-Minister, State Planning Commission Zeng Peiyan, spent almost half a day touring the palace used to serve as a summer retreat for the royal family of the Qing Dynasty. It covers a total area of 290 hectares, three quarters of which are lakes.

The park, built by Empress Ci Xi (the Empress Dowager), comprises Lake Kunming and Longevity Hill.

A covered walkway stretching 728 metres, known as the long corridor, runs along the northern side of the lake and is famous for the paintings on its beams.

Dr Mahathir, who was accompanied by Pulau Pinang Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon, Deputy Education Minister Datuk Dr Fong Chan Onn and the Malaysian ambassador here, Mohamad Amir Jaafar, was later entertained to lunch by Zeng Peiyan who is also the chairman of the Reception Committee.

The lunch was held at the Diaoyutai State Guest House.

The Prime Minister later visited a Chinese painting exhibition and demonstration by Chinese painters at Villa 14 of the State Guest House.

This evening, Dr Mahathir and the Malaysian delegation will be hosted to dinner by the Asian Strategy and Leadership Institute (Asli), the organiser of the two-day Beijing Dialogue on Malaysia-China Partnership opening here tomorrow.

Dr Mahathir will deliver a keynote address entitled "The Dawn of the Asian Century: A Malaysian Perspective" at the opening of the dialogue. Some 700 participants -- 450 Chinese businessmen and officials and 250 members of the Malaysian corporate sector -- have registered for the dialogue.

The prime minister begins a hectic schedule tomorrow by calling on his Chinese counterpart Premier Li Peng at the Eastern Hall, Great Hall of the People to be followed by a formal meeting at Fujian Hall.

He is also scheduled to meet Vice-Premier Zhu Rongji at China World Hotel and call on President Jiang Zemin at the Great Hall. -- BERNAMA

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