

15 JUL 1996

PM ARRIVES FOR OFFICIAL VISIT TO KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

By: Rachman Norodin

BISHKEK, July 15 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali arrived here today for a four-day official visit to the Kyrgyz Republic, the first by a Malaysian Prime Minister.

Kyrgyz President Askar Akayev and Madam Akayev welcomed Dr Mahathir and Dr Siti Hasmah as they disembarked from a chartered Malaysia Airlines Airbus 330 which touched down at the Manas airport at 5pm local time (7pm Malaysian time) after an eight-hour journey from Kuala Lumpur.

Dr Mahathir's counterpart Apas Jumagulov and the Kyrgyz Foreign Minister Madam Rosa Otunbayeva were also on hand to receive the Malaysian leader and his delegation.

The customary playing of the national anthems of Malaysia and the Kyrgyz Republic and a march past by a military guard of honour were highlights of the welcoming ceremony which commenced after Kyrgyz dignitaries were introduced to Dr Mahathir by Akayev.

Tonight, President Akayev entertained Dr Mahathir and the official delegation to a state banquet to mark the visit which is at the invitation of Akayev who visited Malaysia in July last year. -- BERNAMA

RN JK