

29 MAY 1996

LEAD Thai-Visit

THAI PM ARRIVES FOR TWO-DAY OFFICIAL VISIT

KUALA LUMPUR, May 29 (Bernama) -- Thai Prime Minister Banharn Silpa-Archa arrived today for a two-day official visit to Malaysia to strengthen bilateral ties and promote economic cooperation.

Banharn was accompanied by his wife Jamsai and a 60-member delegation that includes Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Amnuay Virawan, Labour and Social Welfare Minister Prasong Boonpong, senior government officials and businessmen.

The Thai premier and his wife were accorded a ceremonial welcome at Parliament House where they were received by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali.

The ceremony was held indoors because of rain.

A 60-member Royal Malay Regiment band led by Lt Norman Kamaruddin played the national anthems of the two countries.

Dr Mahathir then presented Banharn to Cabinet ministers and foreign dignitaries.

Banharn's arrival at the Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah Airport in Subang earlier was welcomed by Foreign Minister Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and Deputy Housing and Local Government Minister Datuk Tajol Rosli Mohd Ghazali, who is the minister-in-attendance.

The Thai premier and his wife are scheduled to have an audience with the Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Ja'afar and Raja Permaisuri Agong Tuanku Najihah at Istana Negara.

Banharn will also visit the office of the Malaysia-Thailand Joint Authority (MTJA) in Jalan Ampang later today.

Tonight, he will attend a dinner hosted by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at Sri Perdana.

Banharn will have a working breakfast with Thai businessmen in Malaysia at Carcosa Seri Negara tomorrow.

Later, he will hold talks with Dr Mahathir followed by a meeting between the Thai and Malaysian delegations.

The two prime ministers will witness the signing of two memoranda of understanding on sale and purchase of natural gas from the Malaysia-Thailand Joint Development Area between MTJA, its production sharing contractors and the buyers of the gas.

A separate programme has been lined up for Jamsai which includes a tour of the Kuala Lumpur Telecommunication Tower.

Banharn is scheduled to attend a luncheon with the Thai community shortly before his departure to Singapore. -- BERNAMA

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