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Mahathir-Arrival

DR MAHATHIR ARRIVES FOR THREE-DAY VISIT

By: Abd Rahman Ahmad

KUWAIT CITY, April 5 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad arrived here for a three-day visit to enhance bilateral ties and developing new avenues for cooperation in trade and investment.

Accompanying Dr Mahathir is a 15-member delegation comprising businessmen and officials. Among the businessmen are Malaysia Airlines (MAS) executive chairman Tajudin Ramli, Bank Islam Chief Executive Officer Datuk Ahmad Tajuddin Abd Rahman.

They include Entrepreneur Development Minister Datuk Mustapa Mohamed, Sarawak Chief Minister Datuk Patinggi Haji Taib Mahmud, Terengganu Menteri Besar Tan Sri Wan Mokhtar Ahmad and Deputy Finance Minister Datuk Dr Affifuddin Omar.

Dr Mahathir was met on arrival at the Kuwait International Airport here by acting Prime Minister of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah who is also Foreign Minister.

After a grand welcome, the Prime Minister then proceeded to Royal Palace where he and his wife Datin Seri Siti Hasmah Mohamad will be staying during the Gulf state.

Malaysia first established relations with Kuwait in 1963 and this was followed by the opening of Kuwait embassy in 1981 in Kuala Lumpur, its first in South East Asia. Since then trade between the two countries has increased but in Malaysia's favour.

Bilateral ties were further strengthened by the visit of the then Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak Hussein to Kuwait in 1975 and Emir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah visited Malaysia in September 1980.

Kuwait, which is undergoing a reconstruction programme due to the Gulf war, hopes to see more cooperation between Kuwaiti businessmen and their Malaysian counterparts.

This is evident following a visit last November to Malaysia by officials from 13 Kuwaiti companies to explore opportunities to import Malaysian products for the local market and neighbouring states.

While here, Dr Mahathir will visit several places of interest like the Kuwait Liberation Tower, also serving as (a telecommunication tower, which is the fourth tallest in the world and the Seif Palace, a newly completed government office of the Emir, Prime Minister and cabinet ministers.

He will also be taken to a tour of the city which is slowly been rebuilt following the 1990 Iraqi invasion and the ruins of war is immediately noticed by a newcomer to the city.

Badly damaged buildings are demolished to make way for new ones.

Tomorrow, Dr Mahathir will hold bilateral meeting and witness the signing of a double-taxation agreement between Malaysia and Kuwait.

He will also address Kuwaiti businessmen and hold dialogue session before wrapping up his visit the next day.

Dr Mahathir will depart for Bahrain on Monday, the second-leg of his visit to the Gulf states. -- BERNAMA

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