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Mahathir-Bahrain

MAHATHIR ARRIVES IN BAHRAIN FOR 3-DAY VISIT

MANAMA, April 7 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad arrived here today for a three-day official visit accompanied by wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali.

Dr Mahathir was received on arrival at the international airport here by his Bahraini counterpart Khalifa Salman Al-Khalifa.

After an airport state welcoming ceremony he had an audience with the Emir of Bahrain Sheikh Isa Salman Al-Khalifa at the Refa Palace.

Dr Mahathir is scheduled to hold bilateral talks with his Bahraini counterpart tonight.

Dr Mahathir's official entourage include Entrepreneur Development Minister Datuk Mustapa Mohamed, Terengganu Menteri Besar Tan Sri Wan Mokhtar Ahmad and Deputy Finance Minister Datuk Affifuddin Omar.

A large business delegation comprising Malaysian corporate leaders is also accompanying him.

Tomorrow, Dr Mahathir is scheduled to deliver a keynote address at the Gulf Economic Forum which will discuss, among other things, economic reforms, capital markets and attempts to diversify the oil-reliant economies of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

The conference, entitled "GCC Strategies and Global Relationships at the Turn of the Century", is expected to be attended by officials from the Gulf, Asia, Africa, Europe and the United States.

The GCC countries -- Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates -- produce about 18 per cent of the world's crude oil and oil exports generate more than two-thirds of their income.

Dr Mahathir's itinerary here include a meeting with the Bahraini Chamber of Commerce and Bankers before wrapping up his visit the next day.

He last visited Bahrain in 1982.

Dr Mahathir will depart for Islamabad on Wednesday for a one-day visit to Pakistan.-- BERNAMA

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