

10 SEP 1997

Mahathir-Genghis

MAHATHIR TAKES A LOOK AT MONGOLIAN ANCIENT TIMES

By: Zulkefli Salleh

ULAN BATOR, Sept 10 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir today took time off from the hectic schedule of his four-day official visit to Mongolia, one of the world's oldest countries, for an insight into the traditional Mongolian way of life.

The Mongolian traditional ways were reminisced to the Prime Minister and his wife, Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, on the third day of his visit, at a traditional Mongolian conqueror camp or rather a victory festival ground.

At the "Ghengiz Khaany Khuree", named after Genghis Khan, reputedly the world's greatest conqueror who seized countries from Asia to Europe in the 13th century, Dr Mahathir witnessed a Mongolian traditional sporting event, Nadaam, consisting of wrestling, horse riding and archery, the three biggest sports to Mongolians.

He was received on arrival by Mongolian Prime Minister M. Enkhsaikhan who hosted the event.

The khuree, located in a picturesque valley surrounded by pinewood-covered hills 17 kilometres from here, enlivens Mongolian glorious past with huge traditional tents known as "ger". They house museum exhibiting artifacts of Genghis Khan.

Dr Mahathir, whose hobbies include horse-riding, spent half a day at the valley where he tried his riding skills for about 20 kilometres and made an attempt at Mongolian archery.

The Prime Minister also witnessed a 16th century religious mask dance based on Buddhist mythology Tsam, in the olden times performed in big monasteries.

He was also entertained to traditional Mongolian war dances to the tunes of ancient songs sung when Mongolian conquerors celebrated victories.

Before leaving the place, Dr Mahathir had lunch with the Mongolian Prime Minister in a Ger where they held informal discussions on bilateral and international issues.

Dr Mahathir today also met former Mongolian Prime Minister Putsaagin Jasrai who called on him at his hotel suite here.

Dr Mahathir then visited the Mongolian Museum of Fine Arts and the National Museum.

Tomorrow, on the final day of his visit, Dr Mahathir will be conferred an honorary doctorate by the National University of Mongolia at a ceremony.

He will hold a news conference in the afternoon before proceeding to the central Asian Republic of Kyrgyz for a three-day visit. -- BERNAMA

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