

31 JUL 1997

Nawaz-arrival

PAKISTANI PRIME MINISTER ARRIVES FOR THREE-DAY VISIT

KUALA LUMPUR, July 31 (Bernama) -- Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif arrived here today to begin a three-day visit to Malaysia aimed at consolidating economic ties between the two nations.

He was received at the Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah Airport in Subang near here by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali.

Also present were Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and Deputy Home Minister Datuk Tajol Rosli Ghazali, who is the minister-in-attendance.

Nawaz is accompanied by his wife Begum Kulsoom and a 50-member entourage comprising ministers and leading businessmen representing different sectors of the Pakistani economy.

His entourage includes Foreign Minister Gohar Ayub Khan, Commerce Minister Mohamad Ishaq Dar, Finance Minister Sartaj Aziz and chairman of Pakistan's Privatization Commission, Khwaja Asif.

The visit by Nawaz, who became Prime Minister for the second time in February this year, is to reciprocate a similar visit by Dr Mahathir to Pakistan in April.

Balance of trade between the two countries stood at US\$650 million (RM1.7 billion) for the 1995-96 period. Pakistan imports from Malaysia totalled US\$708 million (RM1.85 billion) while exports amounted to US\$56 million (RM146.7 million) for the same period.

The Pakistani leader was then whisked to Parliament Square for an official welcoming ceremony.

Nawaz inspected a guard-of honour mounted by officers and men of the 1st Battalion Royal Malay Regiment.

He was later introduced to members of the Malaysian cabinet and the diplomatic corps.

Nawaz and Begum Kulsoom are scheduled to have an audience with the Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Ja'afar and Raja Permaisuri Agong Tuanku Najihah at Istana Negara later.

Tomorrow, Nawaz will hold talks with his Malaysian counterpart Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at the Prime Minister's office.

They would later witness the signing of several agreements for projects initiated by businessmen of both countries.

Nawaz is also scheduled to receive separately Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and Economic Adviser to the Government Tun Daim Zainuddin at his Regent Hotel suite.

On Saturday, Nawaz will visit the National Institute of Public Administration at Bukit Kiara here before delivering a keynote address at a National Chamber of Commerce and Industry luncheon at the Istana Hotel.

He leaves for home on Sunday. -- BERNAMA

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