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LEAD Mahathir

DR MAHATHIR ARRIVES IN YANGON FOR TWO-DAY OFFICIAL VISIT

By: Syed Jamil Jaafar

YANGON, March 9 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad arrived here for a two-day official visit to Myanmar.

He was received by Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) Senior General Than Shwe and accorded a 19-gun salute at the ceremonial welcome.

Flag-waving children also lined the roads to welcome Dr Mahathir as he was driven to the State Guest House where he is staying.

Dr Mahathir and Gen Than Shwe are scheduled to hold private talks this afternoon.

They are expected to discuss latest developments on the financial and economic situation in the region and new areas of cooperation to enhance bilateral relations.

This is Dr Mahathir's first visit to Myanmar since that country joined Asean last July.

Asean groups Brunei, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

Dr Mahathir is accompanied by wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali.

The prime minister's entourage includes Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and Deputy International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Kerk Choo Ting.

Earlier in KUALA LUMPUR, Dr Mahathir was seen off at the Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah Airport by his deputy and Finance Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim. -- BERNAMA

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