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Mahathir-Brunei

MAHATHIR TO MAKE TWO-DAY WORKING VISIT TO BRUNEI TOMORROW

By: E.Sivabalan

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, Oct 28 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will arrive here tomorrow for a two-day working visit to Brunei to set the pace for the strengthening of bilateral ties.

The visit is also part of the Malaysia-Brunei consultation arrangement between Dr Mahathir and Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah who is also the prime minister.

The two leaders had agreed in Kuala Lumpur last year to meet annually to exchange ideas and discuss regional and international matters of mutual concern.

Dr Mahathir's entourage will include his wife, Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, and Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

The Malaysian leader and his delegation will be staying at Rumah Tetamu Darut Takwa (Darut Takwa Guest House).

Dr Mahathir is scheduled to meet the Malaysian community at Rumah Malaysia and receive contributions totalling RM42,000 from them for the National Special Fund.

After attending a luncheon hosted by the Malaysian High Commissioner to Brunei, Wan Yusof Embong, the prime minister will proceed to Istana Nurul Iman for an audience with Sultan Hassanal.

This will be followed by a meeting between the two leaders.

According to Malaysian Foreign Ministry Undersecretary for Southeast Asia Mohamdd Arshad Hussain, the two leaders are expected to focus their discussion on the joint efforts by Malaysia and Brunei in dealing with the regional economic crisis.

Dr Mahathir is also scheduled to attend a dinner hosted by Sultan Hassanal at the Jerudong Polo Club tomorrow.

On Friday, Dr Mahathir will join Sultan Hassanal for breakfast before heading for home.

Meanwhile, a separate programme has been lined up for Dr Siti Hasmah which includes a visit to the Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah Foundation Complex.

This is Dr Mahathir's second working visit to Brunei this year. He was here last Feb 18 for an overnight working visit for talks with Sultan Hassanal. The two leaders met again in Kuala Lumpur last Feb 28 when the sultan made an overnight working visit to Malaysia.

Sultan Hassanal was also in Kuala Lumpur recently for the 16th Commonwealth Games.

Total trade between Malaysia and Brunei for the first eight months this year amounted to RM595.7 million compared with RM830.8 million for the whole of last year.

-- BERNAMA

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