

10 MAR 1998

Mahathir-Return

MAHATHIR RETURNS FROM MYANMAR

KUALA LUMPUR, March 10 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad returned today after a two-day visit to Myanmar.

He was met by Information Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Rahmat, Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Megat Junid Megat Ayob, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Dr Abdul Hamid Othman and corporate leaders on his arrival at the Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah Airport in Subang near here.

While in Yangon, he held talks with Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) Senior Gen Than Shwe.

Their discussions focused on intra-Asean trade using Asean regional currencies.

Speaking to reporters, he said that Myanmar, which became an Asean member in July last year, attracted a lot of investments since it switched to the market-driven economic system.

Dr Mahathir said he found that there was tremendous progress in Myanmar and there were many hotels including five-star standard hotels and industrial estates with a large number of factories.

On the use of Asean currencies in intra-Asean trade, he said: "They were positive...they have agreed to use such currencies especially on a bilateral payment arrangement."

Asked whether Myanmar will participate in the second Asia-Europe Meeting (Asem) in London next month, Dr Mahathir said that Myanmar would not take part.

"This is because Asem is not a bloc to bloc basis... its membership is on an individual basis," he said.

Myanmar and Laos would not attend the meeting, he said. Laos also joined Asean in July last year. -- BERNAMA

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