

12 AUG 1998

MAHATHIR BIDS FAREWELL TO LAOTIAN COUNTERPART (pix)

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 12 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad bade farewell to his Laotian counterpart Sisavath Keobounphanh here today.

Also present was Dr Mahathir's wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali.

Sisavath and his 12 member delegates comprising several senior ministers and officials arrived here last Monday on a three-day visit to Malaysia.

This is his first official visit to Malaysia as Prime Minister of the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

Yesterday Dr Mahathir and Sisavath met to discuss and exchange views on the various bilateral regional and international issues and identified new areas for working together.

Malaysia and Laos among others agreed to enhance barter trade and promote the use of regional currencies in other areas of trade.

The two countries would also have a government-officers exchange programme.

Malaysia is currently the fifth largest investors in Laos and has total commitment of over RM1 billion in 18 projects in the country since 1988.

--BERNAMA

ES