

29 OCT 1998

Mahathir-Arrival

PM ARRIVES IN BRUNEI FOR TALKS WITH SULTAN HASSANAL BOLKIAH

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, Oct 29 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad arrived here today for a two-day working visit to discuss with Sultan Hassanal Bolkihah bilateral issues including the joint efforts by Malaysia and Brunei in dealing with the region's economic woes.

Dr Mahathir's trip to the oil-rich-Sultanate marks the inaugural Malaysia-Brunei consultation arrangement between Dr Mahathir and Sultan Hassanal who is also the prime minister.

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

Accompanying Dr Mahathir were his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali and Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

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

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

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

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

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

Tomorrow, Dr Mahathir will join Sultan Hassanal for breakfast before heading for home on a special aircraft.

A separate programme has been lined up for Dr Siti Hasmah which include a visit to the Sultan Hassanal Bolkihah 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.

Total trade between Malaysia and Brunei for the first eight months of this year amounted to RM595.7 million compared to RM830.8 million for the whole of 1997.

-- BERNAMA

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