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Vietnamese President arrives for State visit

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - Vietnamese President Tran Duc Luong arrived today for a three-day visit to Malaysia, aimed at enhancing bilateral ties.

He led a 35-member delegation comprising several ministers, deputy ministers, senior Government officials and businessmen. The delegation arrived at the Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah International Airport in Subang at 3.15pm.

They were received by acting Foreign Minister Datuk Dr Abdul Hamid Othman and Entrepreneur Development Minister Datuk Mustapa Mohamed, who is the minister-in-attendance.

The visit, the first by a Vietnamese Head of State to Malaysia, is also to reciprocate the visit by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Ja'afar to Vietnam in 1995.

It is also the President's first visit abroad since assuming office last September.

A welcoming ceremony was held at the Parliament House at 4pm where Duc Luong and his entourage were met by Tuanku Ja'afar.

Also present were Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, several Cabinet Ministers, Deputy Ministers and senior Government officials.

After the national anthems of both countries were played by the Royal Malay Regiment Central Band, the King accompanied Duc Luong to inspect the guard of honour made up of four officers and 103 men from the First Royal Malay Regiment under the command of Major Romai Nor Mohamad.

Duc Luong was also accorded a 21-gun salute and was then introduced to Cabinet Ministers and members of the diplomatic corps.

Later, Dr Mahathir called on Duc Luong at the KL Hilton and exchanged views on bilateral, regional and international issues.

Duc Luong was also hosted to a State banquet dinner by the King at Istana Negara. Tomorrow morning, the delegation will visit the Petronas Twin Towers.

They will also be hosted to lunch by the National Chamber of Commerce and Industry Malaysia, where Duc Luong is scheduled to address leading Malaysian businessmen.

The delegation will also visit the Golden Hope Refinery in Sepang later in the day.

Also on the President's itinerary is a visit to the Forest Research Institute of Malaysia and the Art and Handicraft Complex.

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