

16 MAR 1998

Vietnam-Visit

VIETNAMESE PRESIDENT ARRIVES FOR HISTORIC VISIT

KUALA LUMPUR, March 16 (Bernama) -- Vietnamese President Tran Duc Luong arrived here today to begin a three-day state visit, the first by a Vietnamese head of state since the two countries established diplomatic ties in 1973.

Luong's trip, aimed at enhancing bilateral ties between the two Southeast Asian nations, is also to reciprocate the visit by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Ja'afar to Vietnam in 1995.

The Vietnamese leader was received on arrival at the Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah Airport by Acting Foreign Minister Datuk Dr Abdul Hamid Othman and Entrepreneur Development Minister Datuk Mustapa Mohamed, who is the Minister-in-Attendance.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi is in Qatar to attend the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) Foreign Ministers' meeting.

Also at the airport were Malaysia's Ambassador to Vietnam Zainal Abidin Zin and Vietnam's Ambassador to Malaysia Hoang Nhu Ly and senior government officials.

Luong was whisked to Parliament Square for the official welcoming ceremony.

He is accompanied by a 35-member delegation comprising several ministers, deputy ministers, senior government officials and businessmen.

Later, Luong was accorded an official welcome at the Parliament Square.

He was received by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Ja'afar and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Luong inspected a guard-of-honour mounted by 107 officers and men of the Royal Malay Regiment under the command of Mejar Romai Nor Mohamed.

He was introduced to Cabinet members, heads of foreign missions and other dignitaries.

A 21-gun salute was fired. The national anthems of both countries were also played.

Luong will hold discussions with Dr Mahathir today on bilateral, regional and international issues.

Tonight, the Vietnamese president will attend a state banquet hosted by Tuanku Ja'afar at Istana Negara. -- BERNAMA

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