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Dr Mahathir off to Mecca to perform the Haj

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed.- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad left for Mecca today to perform the Haj.

Cabinet ministers, senior civil servants and well-wishers turned up in big numbers at the Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah Airport to send him off.

Dr Mahathir who is due back on March 31, was accompanied by wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali.

They left on board a Government VIP jet to Jeddah at about 2pm.

The Prime Minister will join some two million Muslims, including 22,000 from Malaysia, in performing the haj this year.

Among those at the airport was Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

Since the Prime Minister will be away in Mecca, he will not hold the customary Aidil Adha open house this time.

His personal representative in Kubang Pasu, Tan Sri Osman Aroff said in Alor Star that Dr Mahathir had asked him to hand over four head of cattle, one each for the community in Jitra, Tunjang, Titi Gajah and Pendang.

He said the Prime Minister wished Kubang Pasu residents Selamat Hari Raya Korban and hoped that they would celebrate the event happily even without his usual open house.

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