

15 AUG 1999

Mahathir-Departure

DR MAHATHIR LEAVES FOR TRIP TO RUSSIAN REPUBLICS, CHINA

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 15 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today left for Khabarovsk, the capital of the Russian autonomous republic of Khabarovskii for a three-day visit at the invitation of its president, Ishaev Victor Ivanovich.

He was accompanied by his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali.

Present at the Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah Airport in Subang to see him off were Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, several cabinet ministers and deputy ministers.

He is scheduled to fly into Khabarovsk late tonight. It is a city of some 700,000 people on the banks of the Amur River in the Russian Far East.

Dr Mahathir is expected to hold discussions with the republic's leaders and visit, among others, an aircraft factory and a ship-building and timber yard.

The prime minister and his entourage will then fly to Beijing for a three-day visit to China beginning Aug 18 at the invitation of his Chinese counterpart Zhu Rongji.

The trip is in conjunction with the 25th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Kuala Lumpur and Beijing.

Dr Mahathir is scheduled to call on President Jiang Zemin and hold talks with Zhu Rongji.

After the Chinese interlude, the prime minister will head on Aug 20 for Ulan Ude, the capital of another Russia's autonomous republic, Buryatia.

As is the case in Khabarovsk, Dr Mahathir is interested to look at, among others, Buryatia's aviation industry.

Buryatia is located in the South-Central region of Siberia along the eastern shore of Lake Baikal.

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