

18 FEB 1999

Mahathir-Welcome

LION DANCE WELCOME FOR DR MAHATHIR AT SANDAKAN AIRPORT

SANDAKAN, Feb 18 (Bernama) -- Still in a Chinese New Year mood, the people of Sandakan gave Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad a rousing lion dance welcome when he arrived for a three-day visit to Sabah today.

Upon arrival at the airport on a special aircraft at 10.50am, Dr Mahathir and his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali were greeted by Chief Minister Tan Sri Bernard Dompok, state ministers and Sabah BN component party leaders.

Dr Mahathir and Dr Siti Hasmah shook hands and exchanged pleasantries with local residents representing various ethnic groups at the airport.

About 5,000 people and members of the Sabah Barisan Nasional (BN) component parties began to gather at the airport grounds as early as 8am to welcome Dr Mahathir.

Some were carrying banners expressing support for Dr Mahathir's leadership and the ruling BN.

Information Minister Datuk Mohamed Rahmat, Deputy Health Minister Datuk Wira Mohamed Ali Rustam and Deputy Primary Industries Minister Datuk Hishammuddin Tun Hussein were also present.

Dr Mahathir would attend two functions during his half-day visit here.

He will address a Kongsia Raya gathering organised by the Sabah BN at the Yu Yuan Secondary School multi-purpose hall before going to the Seguntor Industrial Area to open the 60 Megawatt Libaran Power Station.

Dr Mahathir is scheduled to leave for Kota Kinabalu at about 2.30pm to continue his visit to the state.

In KOTA KINABALU, he would launch the Sabah Natives' Affairs Council at the Sabah Cultural Centre in Penampang.

Tonight, he would attend a kongsia raya gathering at Likas sports complex.

-- BERNAMA

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