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Mahathir-China

MAHATHIR BEGINS THREE-DAY VISIT TO CHINA

By: Ali Mamat

BEIJING, Aug 18 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad arrived here today from Khabarovsk to begin a three-day working visit to China.

He is accompanied by wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali.

They had earlier made a three-day visit to Khabarovskii, an autonomous Russian far eastern region, since Monday.

China's Vice Foreign Minister Yang Wen Chang met Dr Mahathir and wife upon arrival at the airport here.

The Malaysian ambassador here Datuk Abdul Majid Ahmad Khan was also present.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Abdul Hamid Albar and Defence Minister Datuk Abang Abu Bakar Mustapha also accompanied the prime minister from Khabarovsk.

Briefing Malaysian journalists last night, Abdul Majid said part of the prime minister's 22-member delegation arrived from Kuala Lumpur yesterday to join Dr Mahathir here.

They included Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik, Primary Industries Minister Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik and International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz.

While here, Dr Mahathir will meet his Chinese counterpart Zhu Rongji at the People's Great Hall and jointly witness the signing of several Malaysia-China bilateral agreements, including, scientific and economic accords.

Abdul Majid said Dr Mahathir will also call on President Jiang Zemin in Dalian, about an hour's journey by air from here.

Dr Mahathir is also scheduled to deliver a key-note address at a Malaysia-China forum organised by the Asian Strategy and Leadership Institute (Asli).

The prime minister will also launch a promotion for Malaysian-made products at the Parkson supermarket here owned by Malaysia's Lion Group.

As the highlight of his visit, Dr Mahathir will attend celebrations marking the 25th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between Malaysia and China.

Malaysia's second prime minister the late Tun Abdul Razak Hussein and then Chinese Prime Minister Chou En-Lai signed the agreement for the establishment of diplomatic ties on May 31, 1974.

-- BERNAMA

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