

09 MAR 2000

Mahathir-Arrival

DR MAHATHIR ARRIVES FOR OFFICIAL VISIT

By: Openg Onn

JAKARTA, March 9 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad arrived here this morning for an official visit to strengthen Malaysia-Indonesia ties.

In a departure from normal protocol, President Abdurrahman Wahid personally received Dr Mahathir on arrival at the Halim Perdanakusuma Airport here.

The two leaders then left immediately for the presidential palace for private talks followed by a full delegation meeting.

Dr Mahathir is accompanied by wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali and four ministers -- Tun Daim Zainuddin (Finance), Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar (Foreign Affairs), Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz (International Trade and Industry) and Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik (Primary Industries).

Also accompanying the prime minister is a 150-strong business delegation led by Malaysia Airlines (MAS) chairman Tan Sri Tajudin Ramli, who is also president of the Malaysian Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The Malaysian ambassador here Datuk Rastam Mohamed Isa said the prime minister's visit focused on boosting economic cooperation as Malaysia has recovered from the economic downturn while Indonesia is on the road to recovery.

Although brief, Dr Mahathir's visit bears great significance in bilateral relations between the two neighbouring countries.

After the full delegation meeting, both Dr Mahathir and President Abdurrahman are scheduled to hold a joint media conference.

They would later address a luncheon meeting between Malaysian and Indonesian businessmen themed "Rebuilding Business Opportunities In Indonesia".

The two leaders would also witness the signing of several Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) between Malaysian and Indonesian companies.

Dr Mahathir is also scheduled to meet Vice-President Megawati Sukarnoputri and the Malaysian community in Indonesia later in the evening.

President Abdurrahman and wife Sinta Nuriyah will host a dinner for the prime minister and Dr Siti Hasmah.

Vice president Megawati is scheduled to see off Dr Mahathir at the Halim Perdanakusuma Airport tomorrow.

-- BERNAMA

OPP/SJ AO RYN