

26 FEB 2001

Mahathir-Departure

DR MAHATHIR LEAVES FOR CHINA TO ATTEND BOAO FORUM FOR ASIA

SUBANG, Feb 26 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad left for China today to attend the Boao Forum for Asia (BFA) in Hainan.

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

On hand to bid them farewell at the Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) station here were Information Minister Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob and Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik.

The prime minister was expected to deliver a keynote address at the launch of the BFA.

Among the other Asian leaders expected to attend the forum are Chinese President Jiang Zemin. Former prime ministers of Japan and Australia, Yasuhiro Nakasone and Bob Hawke, and former Philippine President Fidel Ramos are also expected to attend the two-day forum.

Malaysia has three representatives in the BFA's advisory group namely former Deputy Prime Minister and Malaysian Human Rights Commission chairman Tan Sri Musa Hitam, former Asean Secretary-General Tan Sri Ajit Singh who is likely to be made the BFA's secretary-general, and former Malaysian Institute of Economic Research (MIER) executive director Datuk Dr Kamal Salih.

The BFA will seek solutions and implement programmes to prepare Asia for the onslaught of globalisation and ensure that economic prosperity is spread all over the region.

It will be an institution whose priority is to deliver viable economic development programmes for the benefit of Asian nations.

Boao is a resort area located in a special economic zone on Hainan island in southern China and the forum has taken its name after the resort.

Dr Mahathir is expected to return home tomorrow.

--BERNAMA

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