

16 AUG 2001

Mahathir-Yemen

DR MAHATHIR BEGINS FOUR-DAY VISIT TO YEMEN

By: Abdul Muin Abdul Majid

SANA'A, Aug 16 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is here for a four-day official visit to Yemen to explore ways to further deepen relations between Malaysia and the West Asian country in both the public and private sectors.

He arrived at the mountain-ringed Sana'a International Airport yesterday evening accompanied by his wife, Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali.

They were greeted on arrival by Yemeni Prime Minister Abdul Kader Ba Jammal. Also present to welcome them were key members of the Malaysian delegation who arrived in the Yemeni capital earlier.

Dr Mahathir will kick off the second day of his visit today with a four-eye meeting with Abdul Kader followed by the customary bilateral delegation discussions.

In a sign of commitment to forge closer relations, Kuala Lumpur and Sana'a will ink two documents, one pertaining to the setting up of the Malaysia-Yemen Joint Commission and the other on cooperation for training in civil administration.

In addition, Dr Mahathir is scheduled to meet with members of the Yemeni Shoura Council, ulamas and intellectuals at the Sana'a Police Academy.

He will then call on Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Salleh at the Presidential Palace before being hosted to a luncheon by the president.

Later in the afternoon, Dr Mahathir will fly to Aden where he will visit the Aden port and the Aden Free Trade Zone.

He is scheduled to call on the Governor of Aden, Taha Ahmad Ghanem before attending a meeting and dialogue session with businessmen and members of the Yemeni Chambers of Commerce and Industry at the Aden Hotel.

Dr Mahathir will wrap up the day by gracing a banquet dinner to be hosted by the governor at the Gold Mohur Sheraton Hotel.

Yemen is located in the southern corner of the Arabian peninsula and has a population of about 18 million.

It began to enjoy relative political stability only after the unification of North and South Yemen in 1990, the crushing of a separatist movement in 1994 and the signing of a border agreement with Saudi Arabia last year.

-- BERNAMA

MAM RM