

11 MAY 2001

DR MAHATHIR CALLS ON CASTRO

KUALA LUMPUR, May 11 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad called on President Fidel Castro here today after the Cuban leader was accorded a red carpet welcome at Parliament Square as he begins a three-day visit to Malaysia.

The two leaders met for about 20 minutes at a posh city hotel where Castro is staying throughout his visit.

Emerging from the talks, Dr Mahathir and Castro posed for the horde of photographers and television crews waiting for them at the lobby. Both did not speak to the press.

Castro looked dapper as he traded his usual military garb for a dark suit while Dr Mahathir was attired in a white "baju Melayu" suit and songkok.

The two leaders were then driven off together in a limousine for a formal meeting at the Prime Minister's Department in Putrajaya.

This is Castro's first visit to Malaysia. Dr Mahathir was in Havana last year and in 1997.

-- BERNAMA

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