

12 MAY 2001

MAHATHIR HOSTS DINNER FOR CASTRO

PUTRAJAYA, May 12 (Bernama) -- Cuban President Fidel Castro was hosted to a private dinner by Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at the Prime Minister's official residence, Seri Perdana, here tonight.

Also present were Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar, several top Malaysian businessmen as well as the members of the Cuban delegation..

The 74-year-old Cuban has cordial ties with Dr Mahathir as they are both in the forefront of efforts to minimise Western domination over developing countries.

Earlier today, Castro, who is on his first visit to Malaysia since becoming Cuba's leader 42 years ago, ascended the world's tallest twin structures, the Petronas Twin Towers, in downtown Kuala Lumpur.

It is home to the country's oil corporation, Petronas, and was featured in the Hollywood movie "Entrapment" starring Sean Connery and Catherine Zeta-Jones.

Castro is scheduled to leave Malaysia tomorrow after a three-day visit at the invitation of the Yang di-Pertuan Agong, Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah.

Dr Mahathir was in Havana last year and in 1997.

-- BERNAMA

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