

07 AUG 2001

Mahathir-Arroyo

MAHATHIR CALLS ON ARROYO

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 7 (Bernam) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad called on Philippine President Gloria Arroyo at her hotel here today.

Dr Mahathir, accompanied by Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, spent about 15 minutes with the president.

Present was Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar.

Arroyo, who arrived here this morning for a three-day visit, is scheduled to hold a four-eye meeting with Dr Mahathir at his office in Putrajaya later this afternoon.

This will be followed by a delegation meeting at the Prime Minister's Department where the two leaders are also expected to witness the signing of several agreements and memorandums of understanding (MoUs) after the meeting.

They are also expected to witness the signing of a unity agreement between the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and a ceasefire agreement between the MILF and the Philippine government.

Earlier, Syed Hamid said Arroyo had made the visit to Malaysia her first in Asean because she considered Malaysia as important.

"She also wants to thank Dr Mahathir personally for all the efforts that he had taken in order to arrive at a peaceful resolution," he said in reference to Malaysia's initiative in bringing the conflicting parties in the southern Philippines to engage in peace talks with the Philippine government.

Syed Hamid said the Philippines also wanted Malaysia to be involved in the re-development and socio-economic programmes in the southern Philippines.

"We have done it in the context of recognising that confrontation is not the answer to achieving the objectives of the parties in conflict.

"As far as Malaysia is concerned, we have always respected the territorial integrity of the Philippines. It is within this context that all the warring parties have come to a form of agreement, for the good of all the parties concerned," he said.

-- BERNAMA

AFY ZS JK