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Megawati arrives for three-day official visit

M.K. Megan; Patvinder Singh

SEPANG, Sun. - Indonesian Vice-President Megawati Soekarnoputri arrived at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport today for a three-day official visit.

She was received by Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar and Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Shahrizat Abdul Jalil.

This is Megawati's first official visit to Malaysia since becoming Vice-President. She had made private visits to Malaysia in 1991 and 1997.

Megawati arrived in Sepang after completing her three-day official visit to Bangladesh which was part of her visit to several Asian countries, including some in West Asia.

Megawati's husband, Taufik Kiemas, Foreign Minister Dr Alwi Shihab and government officials were part of the 40-member delegation.

They will visit Penang tomorrow and later the KLCC.

She will have an audience with Yang di-Pertuan Agong Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah and call on Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

Megawati will be briefed on Malaysia's economic policies by officials from the Economic Planning Unit. Her visit here is on Abdullah's invitation.

In Kuala Lumpur earlier, Syed Hamid said Megawati's visit to Malaysia was to strengthen the close bilateral ties between the two countries and it was not to seek support for leadership in her country.

He said allegations to that effect by certain quarters were unfounded as Malaysia did not interfere in the internal affairs of other countries.

"I do not think that this visit is for that purpose because she has also visited other countries and Malaysia is one country she has not visited. So, this is a normal visit and should not be interpreted as anything else," he said at Wisma Putra's Hari Raya Aidilfitri open house today.

Syed Hamid was commenting on claims by certain quarters that Megawati's visit to Malaysia was aimed at strengthening her leadership position in Indonesia.

Asked if there were any specific issues to be discussed at the meeting between Abdullah and Megawati, Syed Hamid said there would be general issues pertaining to the two countries' economic, political and current situation.

"There will be an exchange of views, it should be free flowing. There is no fixed agenda for the meeting," he said.

On another note, Syed Hamid was asked about the visit of United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan's special envoy to Myanmar, Tan Sri Razali Ismail, to that country at about the same time as Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's visit.

Syed Hamid said the two visits had no connection and no inference should be made.

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