

06 AUG 2001

Mahathir-Navy

PM ARRIVES IN LUMUT TO VISIT RMN BASE

IPOH, Aug 6 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad arrived here this morning to visit the Royal Malaysian Navy (RMN) base.

Dr Mahathir, accompanied by a delegation which included his wife, Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, was greeted on arrival on board an RMN helicopter from Ipoh by Defence Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, Defence Forces Chief Jen Tan Sri Mohamed Zahidi Zainuddin, Navy Chief Tan Sri Abu Bakar Abdul Jamal and several RMN officials.

The delegation was earlier met on arrival in Ipoh by Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Mohamed Tajol Rosli Ghazali.

Soon after arriving at the Armada Base, Dr Mahathir inspected a guard-of-honour and KD Malaya colours and proceeded to attend a briefing on the operations of the base.

During his visit, Dr Mahathir is scheduled to open the RM63.35 million Lumut Military Hospital which can accommodate 35,000 military personnel, ex-servicemen and Defence Ministry civilian staff and their family members.

The hospital, which provides 164 beds in eight wards, was completed in 1995 and began operations on Jan 1, 1996.

Dr Mahathir is also scheduled to visit the KD Jebat and then witness the handing over of a training vessel, M/V Fajar Samudera, to the RMN.

The vessel has been leased by the RMN from Syarikat Pelangi Shipping Sdn Bhd for a 10-year period at an annual cost of RM8.79 million.

It can accommodate at least 50 staff and instructors as well as 300 trainees including 60 women trainees. It can cope training at sea for up to 21 days.

In the afternoon, Dr Mahathir is scheduled to meet RMN personnel, followed with a visit to the PSC-Naval Dockyard.

At the PSC-Naval Dockyard, Dr Mahathir is scheduled to visit an exhibition of weapons and submarines.

Dr Siti Hasmah will have a separate programme. She is scheduled to attend a function organised by the Defence Forces Welfare and Family Association (Bakat) at Wisma Samudera.

-- BERNAMA

AR KAY RM