

16 OCT 2002  
Mahathir-Visit  
DR MAHATHIR ARRIVES IN ANDHRA PRADESH, INDIA

By: Ahmad Zukiman Zain

HYDERABAD, Oct 16 (Bernama) -- Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad arrived this afternoon in this capital of the southern Indian state of Andhra Pradesh on the first leg of his visit to India.

This is his first visit to Hyderabad, a bustling 400 year-old metropolis of about 4.2 million people, which is gaining an identity as the country's Information Technology (IT) hub.

Several arches have been erected at strategic points along the city's main roads to welcome Dr Mahathir.

The Prime Minister and Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali were greeted at the Begumpet Airport here by Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu and his wife Bhuvaneshwari.

Three ministers - Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar, Works Minister Datuk Seri S.Samy Vellu and Energy, Communications and Multimedia Minister Datuk Leo Moggie are in the Prime Minister's entourage.

Dr Mahathir would take a first hand look at the development of the IT sector here.

After checking-in at the Kakatiya Sheraton Hotel, Dr Mahathir departed for the Hyderabad Information Technology Engineering Consultancy (Hi-Tec City) in Madhapur, an hour's drive from here. Several multi-nationals have set-up their branches in Madhapur.

A presentation on the city, which was launched in 1997, was given by the Principal Secretary of IT and Communications Department J.Satyanarayana.

Dr Mahathir then headed for the International Institute of Information Technology (IIIT), located close to the Hitec City.

A major goal of the institute is to impart broad and interdisciplinary IT education.

After visiting the institute, the Prime Minister was taken on a tour of Infosys Technologies facility which employs about 60 computer software professionals.

The company has software development centres in eight cities in India and also outside the country.

Tonight Dr Mahathir and Dr Siti Hasmah attended a dinner hosted by the government of Andhra Pradesh.

Tomorrow, the Prime Minister will visit Satyam Computers Services Ltd, a diverse end-to-end IT solutions provider, at Mayfair Centre in Secunderabad.

He will then return to the hotel, hold a press conference and receive a farewell call from the Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister before leaving for New Delhi.

Dr Mahathir will hold talks with Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee in New Delhi and call on Indian President APJ Abdul Kalam. He will also address the India-Asean business summit.

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