

22 SEP 2002
Mahathir-Copenhagen
DR MAHATHIR ARRIVES IN COPENHAGEN FOR ASEM

By: Mikhail Raj Abdullah

COPENHAGEN, Sept 22 (Bernama) -- The Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad arrived here today to attend the fourth Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM 4), where leaders are expected to focus on terrorism and renew efforts to take political, cultural, socio and economic relations to a significantly higher plane.

The Prime Minister, accompanied by Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, flew in by special aircraft from London and touched down at the Copenhagen International Airport at Kastrupp outside the Danish capital at 11.50 am.

He was met on arrival by Minister of Foreign Affairs, Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar, the ministry's Secretary-General Datuk Ahmad Fuzi Abdul Razak, Malaysian Ambassador to Sweden Datuk Syeed Sultan Seni Pakir, Danish Ambassador to Malaysia, Lasse Reimann and several Malaysian and Danish officials.

ASEM comprises the 10 Asian countries of China, Japan, South Korea, Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, and the 15 member states of the European Union (EU) and the European Commission.

It was established with the first summit in Bangkok in 1996, followed by biennial summits in London in 1998 and Seoul in 2000.

Dr Mahathir's first programme would be a meeting with leaders from the Asian countries to prepare a common stand on issues to be discussed with their European counterparts when the summit begins on Monday at the Bella Centre.

He later attended an informal dinner for both Asian and European leaders hosted by Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen at the Kronborg Castle which was built during the reign of King Frederik 11 in 1585.

The summit proper begins tomorrow with closed-door political dialogues on security issues in the aftermath of the Sept 11 terrorist attacks on the United States, economic and financial cooperation following the global economic downturn, educational exchange programmes as well as discussions on cultures and civilisations.

While here, Dr Mahathir would also meet the Malaysian community in Denmark. He leaves Copenhagen after the summit ends on Tuesday.

Vietnam has offered to host the next ASEM in 2004.

The attendees include Chancellor Wolfgang Schussel of Austria, Prime Minister Guy Verhostadt of Belgium, Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah of Brunei, Prime Minister Zhu Rongji of China, Prime Minister Paavo Lipponen of Finland, President Jacques Chirac of France, Prime Minister Constantinos Simitis from Greece, Prime Minister Bertie Ahern from Ireland, Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi of Italy, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan, President Kim Dae-Jung of South Korea, Prime Minister Jean-Claude Juncker of Luxembourg, Prime Minister Jose Manuel Durao Barroso of Portugal, Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong of Singapore, Spanish Prime Minister Don Jose Maria Aznar Lopez, Prime Minister Goran Persson of Sweden, Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra of Thailand, Prime Minister Jan Pieter Balkenende of the Netherlands, Vietnamese Prime Minister Phan Van Khai and EU Commission President, Romano Prodi.

Notable absentees are British Prime Minister Tony Blair, President Gloria Arroyo of the Philippines and Indonesian President Megawati Sukarnoputri.

--BERNAMA
MR MR AAM