

18 AUG 2002

Mahathir-Arrival

DR M ARRIVES IN YANGON FOR TWO-DAY VISIT

By: Rohana Mustaffa

YANGON, Aug 18 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad arrived here today to begin a two-day working visit to Myanmar.

He was greeted on arrival at the Yangon International Airport by Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Senior General Than Shwe, Vice-Chairman of the council Gen Maung Aye, the council's Secretary-General (I), Lt-Gen Khin Nyut, Malaysian Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar and Malaysian Ambassador to Myanmar Datuk Cheah Sam Kip.

Dr Mahathir, accompanied by Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, is leading a 300-member delegation made up of ministers, including International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz and Energy, Communications and Multimedia Minister Datuk Leo Moggie, senior government officials and a host of businessmen headed by Malaysian Industry-Government Group of High Technology (MiGHT) Joint Chairman Tan Sri Dr Ahmad Zaharudin Idrus.

Dr Mahathir's visit today, the fourth since 1988 and about 10 days after he met up with two Asean heads of government in Bali, was to reciprocate the one made by Than Shwe in September last year.

Upon arrival Dr Mahathir was invited to try out Myanmar's e-passport system and inspected its clearance counter. The e-passport, similar to the one used by Malaysia, besides bearing the owner's photograph and data, has a special added feature -- the passport holder's thumb print.

Dr Mahathir and Dr Siti Hasmah then headed for Sein-Le-Kantha State House, his official residence during his visit.

He is scheduled to have a restricted meeting with Than Shwe at Parliament House later in the day and attend a dinner at the Parliament banquet hall where a cultural performance will be staged to entertain the guest of honour.

Dr Mahathir's tight schedule tomorrow includes a keynote address at the Malaysia-Myanmar Technology conference jointly organised by MiGHT and the State Peace and Development Council in collaboration with the Malaysian External Trade Development Corporation (Matrade) and Sultan Iskandar Institute (ISI).

He will also witness the signing ceremony of two memorandums of understanding (MoUs), the offshore oil exploration contract agreement between Malaysia's national oil company, Petronas, and Myanmar's Ministry of Energy and Yangon Strategic Development and Action Plan between Yangon City Development Committee and MiGHT/ISI.

An international telecommunication services agreement between Maxis International Sdn Bhd and Myanmar Post and Telecommunication would also be signed.

Dr Mahathir is also scheduled to meet members of the Malaysian Association of Myanmar (MAM), will tour the Myanmar Information and Communication Technology Park, witness the handing over of Smart School Laboratory project and wrap up his programme by visiting a hospital that specialised on treatment using traditional medicine.

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