

19 OCT 2002

Mahathir-Saudi (With Pix)

DR MAHATHIR ARRIVES IN SAUDI ARABIA FOR TWO-DAY VISIT

From Zulkefli Salleh

RIYADH, Oct 19 (Bernama) -- Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad arrived here today for a two-day visit to Saudi Arabia.

Dr Mahathir's itinerary began with visiting recuperating Malaysian siamese twins separated by Saudi surgeons at the King Fahad National Guard Hospital in King Abdul Aziz Medical City, about 40-minute drive from here.

The twins were freed from their four-year long physical bondage on Sept 17 in a 23-hour operation costing Rm1.69 million fully sponsored by Saudi Crown Prince Prince Abdullah.

Dr Mahathir paid the visit about an hour after his arrival from Islamabad, Pakistan.

The twin brothers, Ahmad and Muhammad Rosli, are undergoing physiotherapy to adapt to their new condition in a special room at the hospital's Paediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU).

Dr Mahathir, who is accompanied by Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, is scheduled to deliver a keynote address at a seminar on "The Future Vision for the Saudi Economy" later today.

He is also scheduled to hold a dialogue with Saudi corporate leaders and have an audience with King Fahd bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud.

Dr Mahathir will sum up his visit with performing the Umrah (small haj) at the Holy City of Mecca tomorrow.

--BERNAMA

ZS LES MFJ AAM