

12 JUN 2002
Mahathir-Ceremony
DR MAHATHIR ACCORDED STATE WELCOME IN LUXEMBOURG

By: Mohd Fisol Jaafar

LUXEMBOURG, June 12 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad was today accorded a state welcome in conjunction with his two-day official visit to Luxembourg, the first by a Malaysian Prime Minister.

Dr Mahathir, accompanied by his wife, Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, arrived here last night from Geneva, where he concluded his three-day official visit to Switzerland.

The welcoming ceremony was held at the Clairefontaine Square in the bright, cool Luxembourg City summer morning. Awaiting to receive him was his Luxembourgish counterpart Jean Claude Juncker.

After inspecting a military guard of honour, both leaders introduced members of their respective delegations.

Also accompanying the Prime Minister are Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling iong Sik, International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz and Bank Negara Malaysia Governor Tan Sri Zeti Akhtar Aziz.

A Malaysian business delegation is led by Arab-Malaysian Banking Group chairman Tan Sri Azman Hashim.

From Clairefontaine Square in the old quarters of Luxembourg, Dr Mahathir took a three-minute walk to the Grand Ducal Palace where he had a 30-minute audience with Luxembourg monarch, Grand Duke Henri.

The Prime Minister later adjourned to Luxembourg Parliament nearby where he was met by the President of Parliament Jean Spautz and was introduced to members of Luxembourg Committee for Foreign and European Affairs for Defence.

This afternoon, Dr Mahathir is scheduled to attend a luncheon hosted by Minister of Economy and Transport Henri Grethen and later deliver a keynote address at a meeting and dialogue session with Luxembourgish business fraternity.

Late this afternoon, he will have a bilateral meeting with Prime Minister Juncker before both leaders join the delegations' meeting at Castle of Senningen.

After visiting the Museum of History of the City of Luxembourg, Dr Mahathir will attend an official dinner hosted by Juncker at Castle of Senningen.

Located within the heart of Europe, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg forms an entity, which through the centuries has been able to maintain its uniqueness.

Its enterprising population of 44,000 has turned the nation from an agricultural backwater into a modern economic success story over the past century and a half.

Luxembourg is a prosperous and highly industrialised nation with a dynamic and thriving iron-steel, financial and high-tech know-how sectors.

Its government comprises a 12-member Council of Ministers led by the Prime Minister and a 21-member Council of State appointed by the Grand Duke, who advises him on proposed legislation.

-- BERNAMA
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