

19 AUG 2002

Mahathir-return

MAHATHIR RETURNS AFTER VISITING MYANMAR

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 19 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad returned tonight from a two-day visit to Myanmar.

The prime minister, who was accompanied by his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali during the visit, led a 300-member official and business delegation including Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar, International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz and Energy, Communications and Multimedia Minister Datuk Leo Moggie.

Several cabinet ministers were at the Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) base in Subang near here to receive them.

During the visit, Dr Mahathir had among other things, held talks with his Myanmar's Senior General Than Shwe, who is also chairman of the State Peace and Development Council. Dr Mahathir had described the meeting as a good discussion on how to encourage business and cooperation in the field of technology between the two countries.

He had also conveyed to Than Shwe that he was very much interested in seeing the herbal industry in Myanmar and whether there was a possibility for both countries to collaborate in the development of herbal treatment.

The visit to Myanmar, Dr Mahathir's second to that country in 19 months and the fourth since 1988, was to reciprocate the one made by Than Shwe in September last year.

The previous trip by Dr Mahathir was in January last year during which Myanmar provided opportunities to Malaysian companies, especially in the field of processing raw materials, which are in abundance in Myanmar.

Kuala Lumpur and Yangon established diplomatic relations in 1958 and Myanmar became a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) in 1997.

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