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NAM-Kaddumi

ARAFAT'S MESSAGE OF GRATITUDE TO DR MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 22 (Bernama) -- Palestinian President Yasser Arafat has prepared a message of gratitude to Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and the Malaysian government for their efforts in trying to get him to attend the 13th Non-Aligned Movement Summit here.

Palestinian Foreign Minister and head of delegation to the summit Farouk Kaddumi said today that the message would be delivered to the Malaysian prime minister should Arafat fail it to make it to Kuala Lumpur for the six-day gathering which started two days ago.

"I've also been asked to convey to Dr Mahathir his (Arafat's) best wishes and regards and gratitude for the support we've received from the government and the Malaysian people," he told Bernama upon arrival at the KL International Airport in Sepang last night for the ministerial meeting today.

Arafat is caught in a very difficult situation as no one could guarantee his safe return to Palestine if he decides to come here.

However, Kaddumi said, the Palestinian leader was not giving up hope to attend the summit of the NAM leaders, scheduled for Monday and Tuesday.

Meanwhile, most of NAM foreign ministers checked in last night. They included Singapore's S. Jayakumar, Fayza Aboul Naga (Egypt), Prince Mohamed Bolkiah (Brunei), Yashwant Singha (India), Dr Najji Sabri (Iraq) and Marwan Muasher of Jordan.

The Foreign Minister of Timor Leste, Jose Ramos Horta, also arrived last night. That country, along with Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, is set to join NAM at the Kuala Lumpur summit, bringing its membership to 116.

-- BERNAMA

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