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Mahathir-Departure

DR MAHATHIR LEAVES FOR NEW YORK AFTER THREE-DAY VISIT TO SWEDEN

By: Jackson Sawatan

STOCKHOLM, Sept 24 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad left for New York today after a three-day visit to Sweden.

Present at the Arlanda International Airport to bid farewell to him and Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali were Sweden's Defence Minister Leni Bjorklund and Swedish Foreign Ministry's Chief of Protocol Karin Ehnбом-Palmquist.

Malaysia's ambassador to Sweden Jasmi Mohamed Yusoff and Sweden's ambassador to Malaysia Bruno Beijer were also present.

Dr Mahathir, who arrived in this North European country on Monday, had a busy schedule yesterday.

He visited Sweden's most prestigious medical science research institute, the Karolinska Institutet (KI), not far from the city centre.

KI has a special committee of 50 professors who choose one among the world medical science fraternity that merits to be given the prestigious Nobel Prize award in the field of physiology or medicine.

While at the institute, Dr Mahathir was briefed on research work being carried out there which cover all aspects of medical science.

Answering a question from Dr Mahathir on whether the KI has research carried out on peculiar diseases such as the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), KI's president Prof Hans Wigzell said that the institute was collaborating with various institutions to do research on the matter.

Prof Wigzell later handed books related to medical science to Dr Mahathir.

Wigzell said in jest he hoped that the books could refresh Dr Mahathir's interest in medicine.

Dr Mahathir is a qualified doctor and after he entered politics, he rose to become the country's longest-serving Prime Minister and many described him as the man who prescribes the right type and doses of "medicines" to ensure that the nation stays healthy.

After the visit to KI, Dr Mahathir attended bilateral talks with Swedish Prime Minister Goran Persson, discussing issues of common interest.

Persson thanked Dr Mahathir, who is due to step down end of next month, for making time to visit Sweden, which was at Persson's invitation.

Dr Mahathir also visited Ericsson Complex at Kista, near here, followed by an audience with King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden at The Royal Palace.

He then inspected a Swedish-made prototype patrol boat and attended a series of meetings with Swedish captains of industry before attending a dinner hosted by Investor AB, the largest listed industrial holding company in the Nordic region.

Dr Mahathir told Malaysian journalists before departing for New York at 8.30am Sweden time (2.30pm MST) that the visit had been fruitful and there were many things that Malaysian companies could learn from their Swedish counterparts especially in coming up with products of high quality that are able to compete in the global market.

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