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Mahathir-Arrival

DR MAHATHIR ARRIVES IN BALI FOR ASEAN SUMMIT

By: Openg Onn

BALI, Oct 6 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad arrived here today for the two-day 9th Asean Summit which begins tomorrow at Nusa Dua, one of Bali's leading tourist district south of the island popular for its beaches and resort hotels.

The special Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) jet plane ferrying Dr Mahathir, who is accompanied by Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, touched down at the Ngurah Rai International Airport, about 10 km southwest of Denpasar, Bali's provincial capital, at 2.10 pm (same as Malaysian time).

Indonesia's Minister of Technology and Research Hatta Rajasa, who led local officials to receive them, boarded the aircraft to invite Dr Mahathir and Dr Siti Hasmah to disembark.

Also present to welcome them were Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Tan Sri Bernard Dompok, Foreign Ministry Secretary-General Tan Sri Fuzi Abdul Razak and Malaysia's ambassador to Indonesia Datuk Hamidon Ali.

They were later taken on a 20-km journey to an international resort hotel at Nusa Dua, where they are putting up for the summit at the Bali International Convention Centre (BICC) nearby.

Dr Mahathir will have a tight schedule during the summit. He is scheduled to call on President Megawati Sukarnoputri later this afternoon at the BICC.

Later, he will receive Prime Minister of Myanmar, Gen Khin Nyunt followed by Asean Secretary-General Ong Keng Yong.

Tonight, he will join other Asean leaders at a working dinner, a prelude to the Asean summit, his last as a Malaysian leader before he steps down at the end of the month.

After dinner, Dr Mahathir, Megawati and Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Sinawitra will witness the signing of a shareholders' agreement for establishing the international tripartite rubber company.

The company, a consortium aimed at stabilising the price of the commodity in the international market, will be owned by the three world's biggest rubber producing countries -- Indonesia, Thailand and Malaysia.

Signing on behalf of Malaysia will be Primary Industries Minister Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik.

-- BERNAMA

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