

22 OCT 2003

Mahathir-Departure

DR MAHATHIR LEAVES JOGJAKARTA FOR TIMOR LESTE

By: Openg Onn

JOGJAKARTA, Oct 22 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad left here this afternoon after a brief visit to continue his journey to Dili, capital of Timor Leste, Indonesia's former eastern province.

The Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) executive jet ferrying Dr Mahathir and Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali took off from the Adi Sucipto Airport.

Dr Mahathir will make an overnight visit to Timor Leste, formerly known as East Timor, a tiny backward province that decided to break away from Indonesia through a United Nations-backed referendum in 1999.

He arrived here last night to receive the Asean Federation of Engineering Organisations (AFEO) Distinguished Honorary Fellow Award in conjunction with the regional body's two-day 21st conference which begins today.

Among those in his entourage on the connecting journey to Papua New Guinea, Indonesia's Pacific neighbour on the eastern side of Timor Leste, also known as Timor Lorosae, is Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar and Works Minister Datuk Seri Samy Vellu.

Indonesia's Energy and Mines Minister Purnomo Yusgiantoro, who is also the honorary advisor of the AFEO conference, was at the airport to bid them farewell.

Also present to see them off were Malaysian ambassador to Indonesia Datuk Hamidon Ali and local dignitaries.

-- BERNAMA

OPP KHY RM