

19 OCT 2003

Mahathir-Arrival

DR MAHATHIR ARRIVES IN BANGKOK FOR APEC 2003

By: Arul Rajoo

BANGKOK, Oct 19 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad arrived here today to attend the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) 2003 meeting.

The special aircraft carrying Dr Mahathir, accompanied by Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, and his entourage which includes Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar landed at the Thai Military Air Terminal.

He was received by Thai Deputy Prime Minister Wissanu Krea-ngam.

Also present was Malaysia's ambassador to Thailand, Datuk Syed Norulzaman Kamarulzaman.

The two-day Apec Leaders' informal summit, which starts here tomorrow, will be Dr Mahathir's last international forum before he retires at the end of the month after 22 years in office.

Leaders from 21 Asia Pacific rim are attending the annual gathering, among them US President George W. Bush, his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, and Chinese President Hu Jintao.

Dr Mahathir has a tight schedule during his visit here, starting with an Asean-7 leaders working luncheon hosted by his Thai host, Thaksin Shinawatra.

The other Asean members in the Apec are Brunei, Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore and Vietnam.

Dr Mahathir is also scheduled to meet members of the US-Apec Business Coalition today, before receiving his Canadian counterpart, Jean Chretien, and Taiwan's representative to the meeting, Dr Lee Yuen Tseh.

The Prime Minister will then attend a dinner hosted by Syed Norulzaman.

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