

22 JUL 2003

Chirac-Arrival

FRENCH PRESIDENT ARRIVES FOR BRIEF VISIT TO MALAYSIA

SEPANG, July 22 (Bernama) -- French President Jacques Chirac arrived here today for a brief visit to Malaysia.

He was received at the KL International Airport's VVIP Bunga Raya Complex by Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar and Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Tengku Datuk Adnan Tengku Mansor.

The plane carrying Chirac and his entourage touched down at about 5.30pm.

He was then immediately whisked away for talks with Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at the Prime Minister's Office in Putrajaya where both leaders are expected to exchange views on bilateral and international issues.

Dr Mahathir will also be presenting the 70-year-old Chirac, the first French head of state to visit the country, with the World Peace Award in recognition of peace efforts made by individuals or organisations throughout the world.

The award is initiated by the Malaysia World Peace Foundation.

The two leaders last met in Evian, France when Dr Mahathir attended the Enlarged G8 Meeting.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi will also call on Chirac after which the president will head for a banquet hosted by Dr Mahathir at his official residence, Seri Perdana.

Chirac will round up his brief visit to Malaysia by joining Dr Mahathir for a joint media conference before departing for the airport.

The French president made a private visit to Langkawi in 1997.

-- BERNAMA

RIZ MAM RM