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PM-Arrive

DR M ARRIVES FOR THREE-DAY VISIT TO ALGERIA

From Mokhtar Hussain

ALGIERS, Aug 11 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad arrived here Sunday evening for a three-day official visit, aimed at building a strong partnership with Algeria as well as to promote better cooperation among the South nations, particularly Muslim countries.

Dr Mahathir, accompanied by his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, were greeted on arrival at the Algiers Hourri Boumedine International Airport by Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika and several top Algerian officials.

On both sides of the road leading to the airport, portraits of Dr Mahathir and President Bouteflika were displayed.

Dr Mahathir, who is leading a 127-strong delegation comprising senior ministers, government and corporate leaders, was accorded an official welcoming ceremony. He inspected a guard-of-honour mounted by the Algerian security forces.

His first programme today (Monday) is a wreath-laying ceremony at the Martyrs' Monument before talks with President Bouteflika. The two leaders are expected to touch on several issues of common interests.

Dr Mahathir is the first Malaysian Prime Minister to visit Algeria, the second largest African nation after Sudan.

Dr Mahathir and the Algerian President will witness the signing ceremony of a bilateral agreement on trade and the Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in Information and Communication Technologies.

The Prime Minister will also visit the new "technology park" of Sidi Abdellah, about 25km from the Algerian capital, before attending a state dinner hosted by President Bouteflika at the Palace de la Culture (Palace of Culture).

On Tuesday, Dr Mahathir and Dr Siti Hasmah will leave for Boumerdes, one of the several zones affected by the earthquake on May 21 which left at least 250 people killed and thousands homeless.

Dr Mahathir is also scheduled to meet Algerian Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia and President of the Council of Nation Abdelkader Bensalah.

Dr Mahathir will then address a Malaysia-Algeria Business Dialogue before witnessing another signing ceremony of news exchange between BERNAMA and Algerie Press Service (APS).

He is scheduled to give a press conference before departing for Swaziland to attend the South African International Dialogue (SAID).

-- BERNAMA

MOK RV TS