

22 OCT 2003

Mahathir-Arrival

DR MAHATHIR ARRIVES IN DILI FOR THREE-DAY VISIT

By: Ahmad Zukiman Zain

DILI (Timor Leste), Oct 22 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad arrived here today for a three-day visit at the invitation of his Timor Leste counterpart, Mari Alkatiri.

Dr Mahathir is the first foreign head of government to make an official visit to this country since its independence in May 2002.

Alkatiri received Dr Mahathir, who arrived with Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, at the Nicalao Lobato International Airport here.

Accompanying him on the flight from Jogjakarta were Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar and Works Minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu.

Defence Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz and Primary Industries Minister Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik arrived earlier in the day on a chartered flight from Kuala Lumpur together with senior government officials and about 40 businessmen.

Also in the delegation were Perak Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Tajol Rosli Ghazali, Penang Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon and Deputy Home Minister Datuk Zainal Abidin Zin.

Tonight, Dr Mahathir will attend a dinner with the Malaysian community at Hotel Timor.

The official welcoming ceremony will be held tomorrow morning at the Government Palace.

The Prime Minister will later address the parliament session and lay the foundation stone for the proposed Malaysian embassy complex.

He will later call on Timor Leste President Xanana Gusmao and address a business dialogue after lunch.

In the afternoon, Dr Mahathir will meet Alkatiri after which the two Prime Ministers will lead their respective side for a delegation meeting.

They are expected to witness the signing of economic, technical, scientific and cultural agreements.

This will be followed by the handing over of military trucks and equipment from Malaysia.

-- BERNAMA

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