

17 MAR 2003

Mahathir-Arrival

DR MAHATHIR ARRIVES IN BRASILIA FOR OFFICIAL VISIT

By: Mokhtar Hussain

BRASILIA, March 17 (Bernama) -- Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad arrived here at 6.45pm Sunday (5.45am Malaysian Standard Time Monday) to begin a two-day official visit to Brazil, his second since 1991.

The visit is at the invitation of newly-elected Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva.

Dr Mahathir and Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali who were on holiday at the Manaus Resort Town in Central Amazon were received at the Brasilia Air Force Base here by Chief of Protocol Ambassador Ruy de Lima Casaes E Silva, Malaysian Deputy Foreign Minister Datuk Dr Leo Michael Toyad, Malaysian Ambassador to Brazil Tai Kat Meng, senior Brazilian officials and ambassadors of Asean countries.

Dr Mahathir and Dr Siti Hasmah attended a dinner hosted by Tai at Rumah Malaysia here.

The Prime Minister will be accorded a ceremonial welcome at the Palacio do Planalto on Monday and then hold talks with President Lula. A meeting between the Malaysian and Brazilian delegations will also be held.

The meetings are expected to forge closer cooperation and rapport between the countries particularly in the area of trade and economy. Brazil is a major supplier of sugar, coffee, soya bean, steel and paper to Malaysia.

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MOK AZH AAM