

21 JAN 2003

Mahathir-Programme

MAHATHIR ON WORKING VISIT TO EGYPT

By: Abdul Muin Abdul Majid

CAIRO, Jan 21 (Bernama) -- A tight programme which includes talks with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak awaits Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on his three-day working visit to Egypt.

Dr Mahathir and his wife, Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, are scheduled to arrive at the Cairo International Airport from Beirut at about 7.30pm (local time) Tuesday (1.30am Malaysian time on Wednesday).

The prime minister's programme Wednesday will see him meeting his Egyptian counterpart, Dr Atef Muhammad Muhammad Ebeid, before having talks with Mubarak at the Headquarters of the Presidency in Heliopolis.

Dr Mahathir will be hosted to a luncheon by Mubarak where the two leaders will be joined by Dr Siti Hasmah and Suzanne Mubarak.

The prime minister will also meet the Grand Sheikh of Al Azhar, Dr Mohammad Sayed Tantawi, at Mashyaket Al Azhar.

International scholars and academia will get to hear what Dr Mahathir has to say about the situation of the Muslim ummah when he delivers a lecture entitled "Muslim Unity in the Face of Challenges and Threats" at the Al Azhar University.

This will be followed by a question-and-answer session with the participants. In the evening, Dr Mahathir and Dr Siti Hasmah will take in the sights and sounds of Cairo as they go on a cruise of the Nile River during which they will be hosted to a dinner by the Malaysian ambassador here, Datuk Abu Bakar Daud.

The prime minister will be accompanied on the visit by, among others, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar, Perlis Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim, Religious Adviser to the Prime Minister Tan Sri Abdul Hamid Othman, Kedah Mufti Datuk Sheikh Hasbullah Abdul Halim, Perlis Mufti Datuk Mat Jahaya Husin, Johor Mufti Datuk Sheikh Nooh Gadot and Kelantan Deputy Mufti Datuk Shukri Mohamad.

The prime minister will leave Cairo at 8.30am (local time) Thursday (2.30pm Malaysian time) for Switzerland where he is to attend the World Economic Forum in Davos.

Dr Mahathir last came to Egypt in 2000 for the G-15 summit. He made an official visit here in 1998.

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