

05 AUG 2003

Putin-Welcome

PUTIN ATTENDS OFFICIAL WELCOMING CEREMONY

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 5 (Bernama) -- Russian President Vladimir Putin, who arrived here yesterday for a two-day official visit, was accorded a state welcome at Parliament Square here today.

Putin, the first Russian head of state to make an official visit to the country, was greeted on arrival by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong, Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin Syed Putra Jamalullail.

Present were Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, Cabinet ministers and heads of foreign mission.

The president inspected a guard-of-honour mounted by 103 officers and men of the Royal Malay Regiment after the national anthems of both countries were played. The 31st Artillery Unit gave a 21-gun salute.

Dignitaries present at the welcoming ceremony were later introduced to him.

Putin is scheduled to hold talks with Dr Mahathir when the prime minister calls on him at the Shangri-La Hotel where he is staying.

They two leaders are expected to focus their discussions on bilateral economic cooperation and wide-ranging international issues.

They will then attend the launching of the Malaysia-Russia Business Forum, also at the Shangri-La, where Putin will deliver a keynote address.

Later, Putin will call on Dr Mahathir at his office in Putrajaya for further talks and the two leaders are expected to witness the signing of three agreements -- Agreement on Science and Technology Cooperation; Agreement on Cooperation in Information Communications Technology; and Contract for the supply and delivery of Sukhoi SU-30 MKM Aircraft, Integrated Logistics Support Equipment and Services for the Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF).

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