

31 MAY 2003

G8-MAHATHIR

DR MAHATHIR ARRIVES FOR ENLARGED G8 SUMMIT

By: Yong Soo Heong

LAUSANNE, May 31 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad arrived here this morning to attend the Enlarged Group of Eight (G8) Summit to be held in Evian, France from tomorrow.

Accompanied his wife, Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, the prime minister was met on arrival at the Geneva airport by Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar, the Malaysian ambassador to France, Tunku Datuk Nazihah Tunku Mohamed Rus, the Malaysian ambassador to Switzerland, Datuk Ismail Mustapha, as well as Swiss and French foreign ministry officials.

From the Geneva airport, the Malaysian entourage then took a 14-minute helicopter ride to a helipad near the Ouchy boat quay here.

Dr Mahathir and Dr Siti Hasmah were then taken to the Beau-Rivage Palace Hotel, which faces Lake Geneva and Evian, located on the French side of the lake.

The area around the Beau Rivage Palace Hotel, which is a popular spot for tourists because of its tree-lined promenade, is under tight security as most of the non-G8 leaders and officials are staying at the hotel.

The summit is expected to discuss various issues including re-starting the global economic recovery and ways to tackle poverty and health issues.

However, many also expect various contentious issues related to the US-led invasion of Iraq to be brought up during the summit.

Dr Mahathir is also expected to hold bilateral meetings with a number of leaders during his three-day stay here. -- BERNAMA

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