

22 SEP 2003

Mahathir-Sweden

STOCKHOLM SET TO WELCOME DR MAHATHIR

By: Jackson Sawatan

STOCKHOLM, Sept 22 (Bernama) -- Sweden rolls out the red carpet tonight to welcome Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad who is making a three-day official visit to this Scandinavian country, probably his last as Prime Minister of Malaysia as he is retiring at the end of next month.

Dr Mahathir accompanied by Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali is scheduled to arrive at Arlanda International Airport, 30KM from here, at about 9.30pm local time Monday or about 3.30am Malaysian Standard Time on Tuesday.

Also in the Prime Minister's delegation are several ministers, senior government officials and members of the Malaysian private sector.

Dr Mahathir's programme includes talks with Swedish Prime Minister Goran Persson on Tuesday and an audience with King Carl Gustaf XVI.

The Prime Minister accompanied by Dr Siti Hasmah will tour the Ericsson Complex at Kista as well as the Karolinska Medical Institute.

The Prime Minister, who is visiting Sweden at Persson's invitation, is also scheduled to meet Swedish captains of industry and attend a dinner hosted by Investor AB.

Stockholm, a city of 1.7 million people, is the birth place of Alfred Nobel -- the man who inspired the Nobel Prize award that recognises persons who make exceptional contributions in the field of physics, chemistry, economics, medicine, literature as well as peace.

It is the beginning of autumn in Sweden with temperatures ranging from 14 to 17 degrees celcius. The deciduous trees are beginning to shed their leaves.

Sweden is a north European nation of 8.9 million. It is bordered to the east and south by the Baltic sea, shares its western border with Norway and northeastern border with Finland.

Sweden and Denmark, though separated by the Straits of Oeresund in the southwest, have been linked by the Oeresund bridge-tunnel since 2000.

This is the Prime Minister's second visit to Sweden. His first trip was in 1985.

-- BERNAMA

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