

26 JAN 2004
Abdullah-Arrival
PM ARRIVES IN HANOI FOR OFFICIAL VISIT

By: Mohd Kamel Othman

HANOI, Jan 26 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi arrived here this morning for an official visit to Vietnam as part of his Asean familiarization tour.

Abdullah, who flew in on a special aircraft, was greeted on arrival at the Noi Bai International Airport by Vietnamese Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister Le Cong Phung and Vietnamese Ambassador to Malaysia Nguyen Quoc Dung.

Also present at the airport were Malaysia's Foreign Ministry Deputy Secretary-General Datuk Salim Hashim, Malaysian Ambassador to Vietnam Datuk Anuar Abdul Hamid and the Prime Minister's chief private secretary Datuk Mohamed Thajudden Abdul Wahab.

The Prime Minister was accompanied by Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar.

Abdullah then proceeded in a motorcade to the Presidential Palace for the official welcoming ceremony where he was received on arrival at the palace grounds by Vietnamese Prime Minister Phan Van Khai.

After the national anthem of both countries were played, the Prime Minister inspected the guard-of-honour before both leaders headed for the Government Office of Vietnam building for discussions.

Abdullah is scheduled to call on President Tran Duc Luong before attending a luncheon hosted by Van Khai.

The Prime Minister is also scheduled to meet Communist Party of Vietnam secretary-general Nong Duc Manh before leaving for Phnom Penh for his official visit to Cambodia.

Abdullah, who became Malaysia's fifth Prime Minister, succeeding Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, is touring Asean member countries, a tradition when a new leader comes to office.

After Cambodia, he will visit Myanmar, his last official visit, on Jan

29.

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