

Ahmad Zahid Arrives in Riyadh for Five-day Official Visit to Saudi Arabia

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From Elmi Rizal Elias

RIYADH, Oct 12 (Bernama) -- Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi arrived here Wednesday for a five-day official visit to Saudi Arabia.

The special aircraft carrying him and his wife Datin Seri Hamidah Khamis touched down at the King Khalid International Airport here at 10.15pm Malaysian time.

The Deputy Prime Minister was received by Undersecretary of Saudi Arabia's Interior Ministry Dr Ahmed Mohammad Al-Salimand and Malaysian Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Datuk Zainol Rahim Zainuddin.

This is his maiden official visit to Saudi Arabia since appointed as deputy prime minister in July last year.

His delegation includes Dewan Rakyat Speaker Tan Sri Pandikar Amin Mulia and senior government officials from the Home and Foreign ministries.

On Thursday (Oct 13), the deputy prime minister is scheduled to have an audience with King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Naif Abdulaziz Al-Saud and Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman Abdulaziz Al-Saud.

Ahmad Zahid, who is also Home Minister, will then have a meeting with Mohammad Bin Naif Abdulaziz Al-Saud, who is also his counterpart and Saudi Arabia's Interior Minister.

Thereafter, he will visit Saudi Arabia's deradicalisation centre, namely the Mohammad Bin Naif Counseling and Care Centre here where he will be briefed on Saudi Arabia's initiatives in fighting terrorism and its deradicalisation programme for extremists.

He will also meet 250 Malaysian students and expatriates living in Riyadh at a dinner function here.

The Deputy Prime Minister will depart for Madinah on the third day of his visit and is slated to perform the Friday prayers at the Al-Nabawi Mosque before meeting the Malaysian community in Madinah at a lunch function, followed by a visit to Prophet Muhammad's grave later in the evening.

On Saturday (Oct 15), Ahmad Zahid is expected to visit Madinah's Knowledge Economic City and Dar Al-Madinah Museum before heading to Makkah where he is slated to perform the umrah (minor pilgrimage) on Saturday night.

After performing the 'tawaf Wida' he will then head to Jeddah. His entourage will leave Jeddah for Kuala Lumpur on Sunday.

The Foreign Ministry in a statement said the visit would provide an excellent opportunity for the leaders of Malaysia and Saudi Arabia to discuss various issues of mutual interest particularly in the area of security cooperation.

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