

Mahathir visits iconic mosque in Port Moresby

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PORT MORESBY (Papua New Guinea), Nov 18 (Bernama) -- Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad ended the last day of his stay here today by visiting the Hohola Mosque, the first purpose-built mosque in this country.

Foreign Minister Datuk Saifuddin Abdullah said the Malaysian prime minister was instrumental in the building of the mosque in 2001 on a piece of land donated by the government of Papua New Guinea to a local Islamic society.

Speaking to Malaysian media, he said the seed money for the mosque came from a number of organisations, namely the Regional Islamic Da'wah Council for Southeast Asia and the Pacific, Ministry for Islamic Affairs of Saudi Arabia, Islamic organisations in Indonesia, the private sector, non-governmental organisations and individuals.

"What's interesting is that the land was originally offered to Tun Dr Mahathir for the purpose of establishing the first mosque in Papua New Guinea.

"But Tun, in his usual humble way, did not want the mosque to be built by him or named after him and had proposed that the mosque be built by the Islamic Society of Papua New Guinea."

Dr Mahathir and his wife Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali left Port Moresby's Jacksons International Airport at 5.30 pm (local time) and is expected to arrive in Kuala Lumpur tonight.

Dr Mahathir and other leaders had taken part in the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation's (APEC) annual summit here.

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