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Mahathir - awards

from Abdul Rahman Sulaiman

① Dr. M-overseas trips

SANTIAGO, June 21st (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Chilean President Patricio Aylwin Thursday exchanged state awards in a ceremony symbolising the enhancement of Malaysia-Chile relations .

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir was bestowed with the Chilean highest award, the Order to the Merit of Chile, while the Prime Minister conferred on the President Malaysia's highest award, the honorary Darjah Utama Seri Mahkota Negara (DMN), on behalf of the Yang Di-Pertuan Agong. It carries the title +Tun+.

The brief ceremony took place during a dinner given in Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir's honour by President Aylwin at the Moneda Palace here.

Also present were Datuk Seri Datin Paduka Dr Siti Hasrnah, Foreign Minister Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik, Sarawak Chief Minister Tan Sri Haji Abdul Taib Mahmud, Melaka Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Tamby Chik, Perlis Menteri Besar Dr Abdul Hamid Pawanteh and Malaysia's special envoy to the United Nations Datuk Musa Hitam.

In his speech, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir, now on a five-day official visit to Chile, said he came to Chile with the earnest hope that the two countries would be able to put in place a new bilateral teamwork for sustained cooperation. -- more

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He said that on the basis of this, discussion with the President earlier- in the day and the latter's commitment to the same cause, he was confident that this could be achieved.

He said that in the past the Pacific Ocean had separated nations and people more completely than any other body of water.

However, today the wonders of modern technology had caused the Pacific to shrink .

+We can speak with each other as if we are only a street away and in the time it takes to drive' from Kuala Lumpur to Bangkok in neighbouring. Thai land, we can actually fly in-to each other's capital,+ he said.

+The Pacific Ocean should no longer be the barrier it was and Chile and Malaysia must pioneer new partnerships between the countries of the Pacific to take advantage of the shrunken ocean+, he 'added.

President **Aylwin**, who shared the Prime Minister's view, said he was glad to note that his country's relations with Malaysia had improved following the establishment of a Chilean mission in Kuala Lumpur several years ago. -- Bernama

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